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A SERIES

OF

TRACTS

ON THE

DOCTRINES, ORDER, AND POLITY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

EMBRACING

SEVERAL ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

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No. 166.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

CHURCHES CONNECTED WITH THE SYNOD OF PHILADELPHIA.

[The following Report on the subject of giving an adequate support to the Gospel Ministry, though prepared for a particular section of the Church, and having special reference to the present times, is judged by the Board of Publication to exhibit such just views of the subject, and to present so many considerations appropriate to all times and all churches, that they have yielded to a generally expressed wish that it should be put on the list of their permanent tracts. Jan. 1854.]

At the recent annual meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, (Oct. 1853,) the following resolutions were adopted:—

"*Resolved*, 1. That the Elders, Deacons, and Trustees of the several churches belonging to this Synod, be requested to meet on, or before the first Monday in January next, to consider the question: "Is your Pastor (or Stated Supply) receiving a sufficient salary?" and that they report as to their diligence in this matter to their respective Presbyteries, at the next regular meetings of the same.

Resolved, 2. That a Committee, composed of three Ministers and five Ruling Elders, be appointed to prepare an Address to our congregations on this subject; and that such Address be read from our pulpits, by our ministers, previous to such meeting of the Elders, Deacons, and Trustees.

Resolved, 3. That the Address, when so prepared, be published in The Presbyterian and Presbyterian Banner."

The following Committee was appointed under the 2d Resolution, viz: Dr. Boardman, Dr. Plumer, R. P. Du Bois, *Ministers;* Kensy Johns, J. M. Porter, C. Macalester, Saul McCormick, Ephraim Banks, *Ruling Elders.*

The Committee proceed to fulfil the duty assigned to them.

The subject on which we have been instructed to address the churches of our Synod, though largely discussed within the last two or three years, is not yet properly appreciated. Look at the facts.

The various evangelical denominations in the United States comprise about 16,000 ministers. Confining our remarks to that portion of this body belonging to our own Church, (a list containing, according to our latest statistics, 2,139 names,) we may claim for these ministers that they are, in the aggregate, men of liberal education, of intelligence, of earnest piety, and of eminent usefulness. They are the efficient friends of popular education. The great charities of the country find in them their ablest supporters. They are the zealous advocates of all judicious schemes of social progress. They are always on the side of law and order. Their whole influence goes to extinguish vice, to repress turbulence, to impregnate the public mind with virtuous and patriotic sentiments, to mould the discordant materials of our population into a homogeneous mass, and to consolidate our social and political institutions. In the course of an elaborate argument before the Supreme Court of the Union, a late illustrious jurist and statesman, whose loss has been felt as a national bereavement, observed, in speaking of the American clergy :—"I take it upon myself to say, that in no country in the world, upon either Continent, can there be found a body of ministers of the Gospel

who perform so much service to man, in such a full spirit of self-denial, under so little encouragement from government of any kind, and under circumstances almost always much straitened and often distressed, as the ministers of the Gospel in the United States, of all denominations. They are a body of clergymen, which, for devotedness to their sacred calling, for purity of life and character, for learning, intelligence, piety, and that wisdom which cometh from above, is inferior to none, and superior to most others." "I hope that our learned men have done something for the honor of our literature abroad. I hope that the courts of justice and members of the bar of this country have done something to elevate the character of the profession of the law. I hope that the discussions above (in Congress) have done something to ameliorate the condition of the human race, to secure and extend the great charter of human rights, and to strengthen and advance the great principles of human liberty. But I contend that no literary efforts, no adjudications, no constitutional discussions, nothing that has been done or said in favour of the great interests of universal man, has done this country more credit, at home and abroad, than the establishment of our body of clergymen, their support by voluntary contributions, and the general excellence of their character for piety and learning."*

This is a noble and eloquent tribute from an unprejudiced source. And yet it barely glances at the considerations which impress upon the Christian ministry its *chief* value. They are "AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST." To them is confided the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the sacraments. Their benign function is to save the souls of men, to instruct the ignorant, to guide the perplexed, to reclaim the wayward, to establish the doubting,

* Mr. Webster's argument in the Girard Will Case, 1844.

to comfort mourners, to point contrite sinners to the Lamb of God, to "warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The spiritual blessings they are instrumental in bestowing upon the world, are as priceless as "the blood of the covenant," and as lasting as eternity. In a word, whether we regard the ministry in their strictly pastoral character, or in the relations they sustain to our entire social and civil polity, they are the very last body of men with whose services the country could dispense. Their withdrawal would create a greater chasm, and inflict a more irreparable injury upon the leading interests of the Union, secular as well as spiritual, than the removal of any other class of our population whatever.

And yet this body of men, so distinguished for their intelligence and moral worth, so upright in their conduct so indefatigable in their labours, so pre-eminent in their devotion to all that concerns the well-being of individuals and households, and the permanent prosperity of the country, this body of men *is not supported!* So far from being supported, the greater part of them are kept in a state of precarious dependence, or, as the only alternative, obliged to eke out a livelihood by combining some secular avocation with their appropriate work. It has been estimated that the pastors of this country are compelled to devote from one-third to one-half of their time to worldly callings. In numerous instances they are oppressed with habitual anxiety, and driven to painful expedients in order to provide their families with the common comforts of life. Not unfrequently they have to deny their children the advantages of a suitable education. They can purchase but few books. They must forego those occasional remissions of pastoral toil, without which the best constitution will wear out prematurely. And instead of laying by a moderate competence for the future, old age or sickness presents itself to their

minds associated only with images of penury and sorrow, and in the event of death, the cheerless prospect before their families is that of the faithful wife who now shares their burdens, driven in her widowhood to some laborious occupation for a subsistence, and their children possibly dispersed here and there, wherever relatives or Christian friends can be found willing to receive them.

If this state of things were confined to sparsely settled districts, it might admit of some apology. *Missionaries*, in regions of this sort, count upon hardships and privations as a matter of course. But it must be added, on this point, that even our missionaries among the heathen are better supported, and more exempt from corroding anxiety about pecuniary matters, than a large part of the ministers at home. That our domestic missionaries are not adequately provided for, is most certain. Their annual stipends require, in most cases, to be doubled; and the Church will be wanting in her duty, until she puts it in the power of her Board of Missions to effect this.* But, Missionary Churches aside, there are hundreds of congregations in flourishing rural districts, and even in the towns and cities, whose pastors are subjected to the trials which have been described. These gentlemen, cheerfully relinquishing the advantageous prospects held out to them in other professions—professions which would have conducted many of them to wealth and distinction, have given themselves to the ministry of reconciliation. The churches to which they minister, are composed for the most part of families which enjoy a competence, and know what it is to live comfortably. Is it too much to expect that they shall supply their pastors with the means of living comfortably too, that they shall give them an adequate salary, and see that it is *punctually paid;* and

* The average appropriation, last year, to 290 of the 500 Missionaries of our Domestic Board, was $132, and their average aggregate salary, from the Board and their people together, was but $372.

that they shall do this, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of justice? Of strict justice, we say, for this is no appeal for eleemosynary aid. It is a divine ordinance upon which the claim rests: "Even so hath THE LORD ORDAINED, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." And to refuse this support, or habitually to withhold it after it becomes due, is at once to contemn the authority of Christ, and to disparage the manifold blessings connected with a sound and faithful ministry.

In periods of great commercial depression, it may occasionally happen that a feeble congregation will find some difficulty in managing its financial affairs. But the present is no such period. Every branch of industry is thriving. Farmers are getting the largest prices for their produce. Miners and manufacturers are growing rich. Commerce never yielded more generous profits. Labour is at a high premium. All secular avocations are productive and flourishing. But the remarkable fact is that (as matters stand) *the more the country prospers, the worse for the ministry.* For the natural effect of this unprecedented prosperity has been to enhance prices—fuel, house-rent, provisions—whatever (clothing excepted) enters into the support of a family. The present salaries of pastors, with some exceptions, were fixed when these unavoidable expenses were from one-third to one-half less than they are now, so that the appreciation of prices is equivalent to an absolute reduction of their salaries to this extent. The result, therefore, is that the very causes which are making their congregations richer, are virtually making the pastors poorer.

If these statements are to be relied on, the question will arise, "How has this condition of things been brought about? Whence happens it that the ministry in this country has been left with so inadequate a support?" Without going into this inquiry at large, it may be doubted whether the evil has not arisen in part from the perverted use of

certain expressions in one of the chapters of the New Testament. It is well understood that the Apostle Paul waived his right to a pecuniary support from the Corinthian Christians on the ground of expediency; and there seems to be a vague but not inoperative feeling abroad, that other ministers should approximate, at least, to his example. It is not so well understood that he sets forth the duty of the Church to support the ministry, in an extended and cogent argument, and asks, with a pungency which the Corinthians must have felt, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we should reap your carnal things." (See the whole chapter, 1 Cor. ix.) Nor, again, does it seem to have occurred to the persons alluded to, that the Apostles were *inspired* men, that Christianity was a new system in conflict with other religions, and with the radical principles upon which society in those countries was constructed, and that the mass of the early converts were very poor. These facts, duly examined, would show how illogical is the conclusion attempted to be drawn from the example of the Apostle, in respect to the support of the ministry in our own age and country.

Another class of persons are indisposed to sustain the ministry, from the low estimate they put upon the benefits derived from religious ordinances. They are accustomed, as practical men, to pay out their money only for "value received." From a farm down to the humblest agricultural utensils—from a stock of goods to a loaf of bread—they have *something to show* for every dollar expended. But the money which goes to support the ordinances of the Gospel, to secure to themselves and their families the means of grace, brings back no tangible return; there is no corresponding entry on the credit side of the account, and the sum, whether large or small, is regarded as an unprofitable investment, or, at best, as a sheer benefaction. We need not stop to expose the fallacy of this view. If there are

any blessings worth securing at whatever cost, they are those which God ordinarily communicates through the agency of the Christian ministry. And to attempt to gauge the value of these blessings by a mere commercial standard; to put into one scale the innumerable advantages, temporal and spiritual, personal and relative, which a family derives from the ministrations of a faithful pastor, and into the other the few dollars usually paid in the way of an annual pew-rent, and then strike the balance in favour of the latter, betrays a mind too sordid to be accessible to any form of argument.

Again, the habit of passive acquiesence in existing customs, has contributed to increase the evil of which we are speaking. It is common for people to take matters as they find them. Unless their own comfort or interest is concerned, it is easier to fall in with an established course of things, than to essay changes which it will require some time and trouble to effect. It has long been the settled and general custom of the churches in this country, to give their pastors very insufficient salaries; and one generation after another has concurred in the usage, simply because it was the usage.

But there is still another reason—*the silence of the pulpit.* This is almost the only question of practical morality which the pulpit is accustomed to ignore. We are not of the opinion that it *should* be excluded from the teachings of the sanctuary; but considerations of delicacy ordinarily deter pastors from presenting it. The result is very significant. It illustrates in a forcible manner, the potential influence of the pulpit in enlightening the public conscience, and keeping churches and communities to their duty. Here is one subject on which no voice goes forth from the sanctuary; and on this subject there is the most wide-spread and deplorable ignorance and neglect, even in the most intelligent communities. It is not so much that people are not willing

to support their pastors, as that the duty is not fairly brought before them. They do not know the facts. They do not hear the matter discussed and held up in its various lights, as other topics are. They do not perceive its bearings upon individual comfort, and upon the welfare of religion. There must be scores of congregations which would promptly and cheerfully augment their pastors' salaries, if they supposed there was any call for it. But their attention has not been drawn to the subject. No "complaint" has reached them. And it does not occur to them that their pastor may be a man of too much self-respect, or too much delicacy of feeling, to bring his own wants to their notice—that the very qualities for which they love and honour him, will make him suffer long in silence before he tells *them* he is suffering. Let the intimation be conveyed to them from some other quarter, that this is the case—let the bare suggestion be made that this *may* be the case—and they will respond to it. And this is the very office *we* are now performing. Speaking in the name of our venerable Synod, we say to the two hundred and fifty-eight churches under its care, that there is reason to fear that a large proportion of your pastors are receiving salaries entirely inadequate to their support; and we beg you to inquire whether or not these things are so, and, if they are, to apply the proper remedy.

In making this request, we are proposing a measure which, as we believe, is both reasonable and scriptural. Indeed, it is, in our view, vital to the prosperity of religion. The importance of providing a just support for the ministry, in place of the scanty and too often precarious stipends they now receive, must be apparent to every one who will consider its bearings upon all the great interests of our Church. We say "a *just* support," and we ask nothing more. The Presbyterian ministers of this country are not the men to be swayed by mercenary motives: if

they were, the greater part of them would have turned to some more lucrative employment long ago. But they are entitled to a support. It is time they should be relieved of the ungracious distinction of doing more hard work for less pecuniary compensation than any class of men—certainly than any class except day-labourers—in the United States. It is time that the feeling which looks with a jealous eye upon the laborious pastor who is supposed to be laying aside something from his moderate income against future reverses, should be exorcised out of the Church, as a sordid and unchristian sentiment. Our ministers are no miserable parasites, preying upon other people's fortunes, and gathering where they have not strewed. They are no pensioners upon the bounty of the community. Nor are their private affairs to be subjected to a system of *espionage*, which shall canvass every expenditure, and revise every household arrangement, and cavil at the "excessive compensation" which may put it in their power, with a self-denying economy, to reserve a trifling surplus at the end of the year for the necessities of a growing family. The congregations we are addressing will agree with us, that the ministers of Christ should be left to manage their personal and domestic affairs with the same immunity from outward interference as other people; and that the obligation to provide the pastor with the means of a comfortable support, implies no warrant to inquire how he spends his money.

All we are concerned with, however, is "the means of a support." We ask you to do for your pastors what simple justice may demand—assured, that when you come to *discuss* the question on this scale, your sense of the value of their labours will, in many instances, carry you to the line where justice merges into generosity.

The importance of a reformation in this matter may be seen in its probable influence upon

Candidates for the Ministry.—The paucity of young men

devoting themselves to the sacred office for the last three or four years, has awakened a deep and general feeling of solicitude throughout our own and other evangelical churches. Much has been said and written respecting the supposed cause of this untoward phenomenon. And the conviction seems now to have become universal, that one principal reason of it is to be sought in the *insufficient support of the ministry.* It is easy to reply to this, that if God designs a man for the ministry, or if a man is fit to enter the ministry, no such impediment will keep him back. We are willing to concede all that could reasonably be claimed on either of these points; and, in particular, we admit that no pecuniary considerations ought to deter a young man, otherwise qualified, from entering the ministry. But we must deal with facts as they are. The unparalleled prosperity of the country has opened avenues to wealth and honour in every direction. No young man of good principles and average talents, can be at a loss for profitable occupation. In any department of life, except the ministry, such a youth may count with confidence upon acquiring a competent fortune, and (prospectively) maintaining a family in comfort; and with superior endowments, he may be morally certain—allowing, of course, for ordinary contingencies—of rising to affluence in either of the other learned professions. The ministry, on the other hand, holds out to him a career of severe toil with a meagre sustenance—a family exposed to painful annoyances and privations—himself compelled to resort for collateral aid to some secular pursuit; and even with this help, every sinew put to its utmost tension in order to keep up appearances and make the two ends of the year meet. We may say he ought not to mind this; that if the hardships were a hundred-fold greater, they would be amply compensated by the privileges of the ministry and its ultimate rewards. And we should speak the truth. But who are *we,* that we should require young men to encounter

these trials? If GOD calls them to a self-denying service, well and good. But what right has the CHURCH to *make* this so painful a service—to surround the ministry with these difficulties, and load it with these hardships, and then say to her young men, "Here, it is your duty to take this office as it is. I could, if I chose, without the slightest inconvenience, insure you against constant anxiety on the subject of a support for your family, and protect you against the dread of a humiliating dependence, but I do not care to do this; it will take more money than I wish to expend!" Others may dissent; but for ourselves, we maintain that the Church has created, and is bound to redress this wrong. And until it is redressed, it is not for her, nor for any one speaking in her name, to arraign our young men as tainted with a sordid spirit, because they shrink from facing obstacles which her own penuriousness places in their way. This is exacting of them, and *that* at the very threshold of their Christian course, a tone of spirituality—a deadness to the world, and a general maturity in the divine life—quite beyond that which prevails in the Church itself, as is proved by the very circumstances under which she lays this requisition upon them.

Besides, it must be considered that young men do not always decide this question for themselves. Directly, or indirectly, it is in numerous cases decided by their parents. And even Christian parents may be so impressed with the secular aspect of the question, as to employ their influence (not without sin possibly) to divert their children into other callings.

Nor must we exclude a Providence, in looking at this subject. God's care of his ministers is one of the prominent and delightful themes of the Bible. There is no greater source of encouragement and hope to Christian pastors, than the tender and sleepless care which they know the good Shepherd exercises over them. Can it be believed that *He* regards

with indifference the present state of things in the churches? that He approves of the injustice meted out to his ministers? that He views with complacency the anxiety and suffering they endure under the misguided and oppressive policy we are considering? And is it strange, that by arresting the supply of candidates until the Church learns to take better care of her ministers, He should leave her to read her sin in her punishment? We do not assert that this is the true solution of the problem. But, believing, as we do, that there is a great sin lying at the door of the Church, for which the frown of Providence is upon her, we suggest it for your consideration.

If these views are entitled to any weight, it will be seen that the subject of this address has an immediate bearing upon that dearth of candidates for the ministry, which we all have so much reason to deplore. Its connection with *the comfort and usefulness of the ministry* themselves, is so apparent that we need not expatiate upon it beyond a few sentences.

There are trials incident to the pastoral office of which no human agency can relieve it. But those which spring from an inadequate and uncertain support, are legionary in number, as they are most harassing and painful. These the churches *can* remove; and in removing them, they would contribute no less to the usefulness than to the comfort of their pastors. What an amount of moral power would be liberated, if the whole time of our entire ministry could be appropriated to their legitimate duties! Not only would they escape the adverse influences emanating from their indispensable secular avocations, and which are so prejudicial to their own spirituality, but they would go about their work with an elasticity and an energy to which they are now strangers. Every one can understand the difference in the comparative efficiency of two pastors, one of whom serves a people that find their happiness, in mitigating his burdens,

and adding to his comforts, while the other trails after him from day to day, the heavy drag-chain of pecuniary embarrassment and domestic dependence.

And this leads to the observation, that even *on the low ground of self-interest*, the churches should provide a more suitable support for the ministry. If the congregations which have tried the experiment should be consulted, (and we could name such congregations in our Synod,) they would say with one accord, that they have found it good policy to take care of their pastors; that all the kindness shown them has been returned manifold in the increased freedom and power of their ministrations, and their greater efficiency generally. This is not to intimate that mere financial arguments have a paramount weight with Christian pastors. It is simply acknowledging that they have "like passions with other men," and can do more work, and do it better, where they experience sympathy and affection, than where they meet comparative coldness, and are left to struggle with want. In point of fact, it may be doubted whether there is any class of persons who are so much alive to offices of kindness as pastors. The most trivial tokens of affection from their people have often sent a thrill of joy through the entire tenantry of a parsonage, and moistened every eye with tears of gratitude. And next to the supports and consolations drawn from above, they find encouragement and strength in the assured confidence and attachment of their congregations.

In this view, the question of support ceases to be a personal matter. It affiliates itself with every interest of the Church, and every agency concerned in the conservation and diffusion of genuine Christianity. It is no other than the question, in a different form: "Is the Church bound to adopt the most decisive measures for the success of the gospel? Is it her imperative duty to employ every practicable means for extending the influence of religion at home and abroad?"

On these points there can be no difference of opinion; and there should be none, therefore, in respect to the great reform now urged from so many quarters, in the matter of ministerial support; for the two things are inseparable. We will not say that this alone is wanting to develope the full efficiency of the ministry, and thereby, under God, the utmost possible energy of the Church. But we do say, that this is indispensable to the result; and that we believe it to be a measure which would tell in many ways, and with a most wholesome influence upon the cause of truth and righteousness.

How desirable it is that this augmented power should be impressed upon the various institutions and appliances of Christianity, even as regards our own country alone, must be apparent to all who are in the habit of watching the course of events. What with the expansion of our territory, the rapid increase of our population, the multiplication of large cities, the progress of luxury, the violence of faction, the audacity of vice, the mighty influx of Romanists and other errorists, the manifest growth of atheism and turbulence, and the popular disposition to embroil the country in the contests of Europe, there is need of all the conservative influence which the evangelical Churches of the Union can command, to restrain these wayward elements, and to imbue the national mind with the spirit of enlightened piety. The great conflict which is waging around us between truth and error, the Bible and infidelity, regulated liberty and insane anarchy, the providence of God has confided, in an important sense, to the hands of the Protestant ministry of the Republic. It is due to the momentous interests involved in this struggle—interests which must affect not only the future fortunes of our own country, but the well-being of the human race in all time to come—that the champions of so sublime a cause should be hampered with no unnecessary burdens. The work they have to do demands all their powers, all their time, and all the

co-operation they can secure from the people. We simply ask of you that you should disengage your pastors from incumbrances which it is in your power to remove, and let them give themselves wholly to the service of Christ. We are well aware that neither your liberality, nor their zeal, can insure success to their labours. But no people will pause here. You cannot come to their succour in the exercise of a generous and large-hearted Christianity, without praying more for them than you have been accustomed to do. Nor can they avail themselves of your proffered kindness, without awaking to their new responsibilities, feeling a deeper sense of their dependence upon God, and looking to him, with fresh importunity for a blessing upon your souls, and for the universal triumph of the gospel.

There is still another aspect of this question of profound interest, viz: its bearing upon the progress of evangelical sentiments abroad. We are testing the efficiency of the *voluntary principle* of religion. Europe is looking to us with intense solicitude, to learn whether Christianity can sustain itself without an alliance with the State. We are bold in proclaiming that it *can*, and we point with triumph to the beneficent work it has accomplished here. But the concession must be made—and the partisans of ecclesiastical establishments have already made potential use of it—that the voluntary system has thus far failed of providing an adequate support for the ministry. We all believe this to be a casual, not an unavoidable result. But it is time to efface this stigma, and to silence the cavils it has occasioned. Not to do this, will be to discourage the advocates of genuine "Church Reform" all over Europe, and to oppose a fresh and powerful barrier to the spread of the gospel. But this topic is too large to be discussed here.

With these views, we respectfully submit to you the minute of our Synod on this important subject, and invite such action upon it as the state of things in your several congregations may seem to you to demand

No. 167.

CHURCH ATTACHMENT

AND

SECTARIANISM.

BY THE LATE REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

In countries in which there is an established religion, those religious bodies which separate from the establishment, and form distinct denominations, are called sects, and those who belong to them sectaries. But in countries where there is no established religion, as in our happy land, in which all denominations, in the eye of the law, are on a level, there can be no sectaries or dissenters in the technical sense of those words. All denominations are equally sects, i. e., separate divisions or departments in the great family of nominal Christians; and, of course, when we speak of the Episcopal sect, the Methodist sect, or the Baptist sect, we mean, without the smallest disrespect, simply to designate the different bodies of professing Christians known by those names respectively.

It is, indeed, a misfortune that the Church of Christ, which ought to be one in name and in profession, as well as in fact, is divided into so many different denominations. But so the melancholy fact is. Now each of these divisions is a sect or section of the general visible church. And yet the individuals who adhere to these several bodies, provided their adherence be characterized by a truly Christian spirit, may still be considered in an important sense, one in Christ. A man may be a member, and a very devoted, zealous member of a sect, and yet not deserve to be stigmatized as a sectarian in the common and unfavourable sense of that word.

To be a sectarian, in the popular sense of the term, is to be inordinately, unworthily, and offensively devoted to a sect. Those who deserve this appellation, are habitually governed by party zeal, and that zeal at once narrow and excessive. They can see little or no good out of their own denomination, and little or no evil within it. They are so blindly prejudiced in favour of their own church, and so blindly prejudiced against every other, that they can take no pleasure in the prosperity of any but their own. Hence the praises of their own they are continually sounding; the advantage of their own they are exclusively seeking; and as to the edification of any other, they not only seldom think about it, or pray for it, but when it occurs, it really appears to give them pain, as an event which seems to demonstrate that there may be something good out of their own pale. In short, the sectarian, properly so called, is one who is shut up in his views and affections within his own little community, and seldom or never looks, with an enlarged mind, and a benevolent heart, beyond this narrow circle.

Now the term sectarian, thus defined and explained, scarcely any one, however abandoned to this spirit, would be willing to have applied to himself. None are so impatient of the name as those who are most deserving of it; none so intolerant of bigotry as the most blinded bigot. Let us pray, then, without ceasing, that the word and the Spirit of God may so enlighten and guide us in regard to this matter, that we may learn how to regulate our denominational attachments so as, on the one hand, not to be indifferent to truth; and on the other, not to infringe that charity which loves all good men, and which delights in the advancement of the cause of Christ by whomsoever promoted.

Let none imagine, then, that in order to avoid the charge of sectarianism, it will be necessary, or even desirable, that we should give up the peculiarities of our own church, or

cease to have any special attachment to our own denomination. It were just as reasonable to tell the head of a family that, in order to establish a character for patriotism and general benevolence, he must abandon all special attachment and care for his own household, and devote as much attention to the families of others as his own. This would be contrary to every dictate of reason and of natural affection. Equally false and absurd would it be to tell any man that, in order to exemplify the character of a Bible Christian, he must relinquish all peculiar attachment to any system of doctrine or ecclesiastical order, and love and help systems of error, just as much as that which is believed to be in accordance with the Scriptures of truth. Would this be acting the part of a faithful witness for Christ? Would this be "holding fast the form of sound words once delivered to the saints?" Would this be answering the great purpose for which the Church was founded by her Divine Head and Lord, viz., faithfully maintaining and keeping pure and entire all such religious truth and ordinances as Christ hath appointed in his word? The fact is, that what many call their liberality—their charity for professing Christians of other denominations, is nothing more nor less than indifference to truth, or that blind persuasion, which many semi-infidels cherish, that all forms of religion are very much alike, and equally safe. As long as any believe this, they can surely have no rational motive for striving to defend and maintain the truth. Truth, according to this mode of thinking, is no better than error. But can it be an act of fidelity to our Master in heaven thus to abandon what he has commanded us to hold fast; or to carry our complaisance to those around us so far as to suffer the enemies of truth and righteousness to have everything, without resistance, their own way? Is this reasonable, or in accordance either with the word of God, or the welfare of society? Surely not. The instinctive feelings of every enlightened and pious mind

will revolt against the thought. What, then, is the proper course in regard to this matter? Manifestly the following.

If we believe the doctrines and order of the Church with which we are connected to be more in harmony with the word of God than any other—and, surely, we must be supposed to believe this, after solemnly placing ourselves in connection with the ministry and ordinances of that Church—it is undeniably our duty to hold fast those doctrines and ordinances; to profess, without scruple or disguise, our attachment to them, and our preference for them; and to do all in our power to maintain them in their purity, and to extend their influence as far as possible. To hesitate to do this, or to be afraid of doing it, is in the first rank of moral absurdities. A man might just as well doubt whether it were his duty to be more attached to his own family, and to labour more for its support and comfort, than for the families of his neighbours. A truly patriotic and benevolent man, indeed, while his first care is directed to the sustenance and comfort of his own children and household, will feel bound to promote, as far as he can, the welfare and comfort of his neighbours. He will feel it incumbent upon him to visit them in their distress; to minister to their necessities; to take a kind interest in their happiness; and to do all in his power to promote the well being and enjoyment of every individual, and every family within his reach. But he that does not, first of all, and above all, care and provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, the voice of inspiration declares, "hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." This is not selfishness; it is pursuing such a plan as will best secure universal order, comfort, and domestic prosperity.

In like manner, our own church ought, upon every principle of common honesty and honour, to be dearer to us than any other. We ought to take a deeper interest in its support, prosperity, and enlargement; to be more willing

to labour, to "devise liberal things," and to make sacrifices for its comfort, honour, and extension, than for any other. If we have pecuniary means to bestow on ecclesiastical objects, our first and largest contributions should be devoted to that portion of the great Christian family which we call our own. And for that portion our prayers should especially and constantly ascend. We should pray, indeed, unceasingly, for all men; for all Christians; for all in every land, and of every denomination, who profess to follow Christ. Our cordial aspirations should go forth daily and hourly for the edification and enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom in every quarter of the globe; and when we hear of the triumphs of the Redeemer's grace among any denomination of Christians, we ought cordially to rejoice, and praise the Lord; remembering that all who believe in Christ, in every quarter of the world, are "one body in Him," and "members one of another." And, therefore, that Presbyterian who cannot cordially rejoice when he sees good done, or apparently doing, in a Methodist, Episcopal, or Baptist body, has reason to fear that he is to a criminal degree under the influence of a sectarian spirit. Nay, a Presbyterian of the true Bible stamp, will love an ardently pious Methodist, or Episcopalian, or Baptist far better than a cold formal Presbyterian, however loudly that Presbyterian may proclaim his denominational attachments, and obtrude his denominational zeal.

The writer of these pages once knew an eminent physician, who was bred a Presbyterian, and who had been, for many years, a communicant of that church. Happening in the course of an ardent conflict, on a subject altogether unconnected with religion, to become strongly prejudiced against a distinguished Presbyterian clergyman in his neighbourhood, he suffered his hostile feelings so far to govern him, that he left the Presbyterian church, united himself with the Episcopal, and remained in the latter connection

to the end of life. And yet this man, as long as he lived, still professed his preference for the Presbyterian church; embraced every convenient opportunity of attending on its communion; and whenever he wished to enjoy a free, confidential conversation on experimental religion, always resorted to the study of a neighbouring Presbyterian minister, in whose wisdom and piety he had peculiar confidence. What infatuation was here! To suffer a personal pique to separate him from a church which he professed to prefer and to love, and to carry him into a denomination in the teachings and ministrations of which he manifested that he had not entire confidence, and did not feel himself, in spiritual things, at home. What an erroneous judgment was here, as to that which ought to guide us in forming ecclesiastical connections! And what an unhappy example of escaping from a less and a temporary evil, by plunging into a greater!

How much more wise was the conduct of another Presbyterian, a pious and exemplary elder of the church to which he belonged! He had an unhappy controversy with his pastor, which very much interested the feelings of their respective families. On a certain Saturday afternoon, when they had come together for the purpose of adjusting their difficulties, and reconciling all parties, they were so far from gaining their end, that their controversial feelings became more intensely excited than ever, and they parted in a state of mutual irritation, which seemed to preclude all hope of being reconciled. The next day, the pastor appeared in the pulpit as usual, and the elder and his household appeared in his family pew. At the close of the service, as he walked down the aisle, the pastor accosted the elder, and said, "I did not expect to see you here to-day." "Why not?" said the elder. "Why, you have not forgotten," replied the pastor, "what passed between us last evening." "No," rejoined the elder, "I have by no means forgotten it. My

feelings were greatly wounded, and I thought you behaved extremely ill. I thought so then, and I think so still. But though I quarreled with you, I have not quarreled with my Saviour. This is his sanctuary, not yours; and that gospel with which you are entrusted, you have faithfully preached to-day. I did not think proper, on your account, to deprive myself of the privilege which I have enjoyed. I have heard God's precious truth dispensed; and I bless him for the opportunity." Here was practical, consistent wisdom; and here was an instance of an enlightened elder taking more just views of duty than his spiritual guide.

The writer thinks he cannot be mistaken in believing, as he most sincerely and deliberately does believe, that of real sectarianism, in the sense which he has defined, there is less, much less in the Presbyterian church than in any other body of professing Christians in the United States. The great Searcher of hearts is his witness that he says this, not for the purpose of emblazoning or flattering his own denomination; but because he is persuaded it would be unjust to withhold this praise. The truth is, we have hardly enough of the *esprit du corps* in our Church to prompt us to take the trouble of defending ourselves when attacked by other denominations. And this, not because we have a less clear and strong conviction than others of the truth of our system; but because our system itself is more pacific, and less exclusive than that of any other which holds to the importance of truth. For one instance in which a Presbyterian minister says a word in the pulpit to recommend the peculiarities of his own church, or to disparage those of other denominations, the writer will venture to produce many examples of this conduct in the churches around us. Our ministers, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, seldom utter anything, either in prayer or preaching, but what any evangelical, pious Chris-

tian, of any denomination, might hear without invasion of his principles or feelings.

Let no Presbyterian, then, be reluctant or afraid to manifest a warm attachment to his own church, or to step forward, on all proper occasions, to promote her comfort, her enlargement, and her edification. Let him not hesitate to declare his belief in her doctrines; to defend her when attacked; to consider himself as charged with a portion of her support and honour; and to pray without ceasing for her extension and spiritual prosperity. Let him not fear, while he does all this, lest any impute to him the want of Christian charity, or the indulgence of censurable bigotry. But, while he prefers his own church to any and every other; and while he does all in his power to build it up, let him "hold the truth in love." Let him see to it, that he loves the image of Christ wherever he finds it; and that when he sees others "casting out devils," he is never to forbid them, because they follow not with us. Let him see to it that he rejoices in the prosperity of all who manifest the spirit of the gospel; and that much as he loves and prefers his own church, he never allows himself to imagine that she has no defects; and that there is no good out of her pale. In fine, let him do all he can to show by his own spirit and conduct, that the Presbyterian church is a liberal church; that its whole spirit and structure admit of free intercourse with sister churches on just principles; and that it is much more anxious to see the world converted to the holiness and happiness with which Christ came to bless mankind, than to see its own peculiarities gaining universal dominion.

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THE HEARER OF PRAYER:

THE INTERCESSOR ABOVE:

THE PROMPTER WITHIN.

BY THE REV. JAMES HAMILTON.

Prayer has actual Power—The Petitionless Prayer—The efficacy of Prayer revealed—It is Matter of Fact—*A priori* Objections irrelevant—The declarations of God himself—The Saviour's Testimony—Instances of answered Prayer—Newton's Experience—The Inhabitants of Jupiter and the Husbandman—God is the Hearer of Prayer, for he is the living God, the Almighty, and the God of Love—The Mediation of Christ—The Work of the Spirit—Guilt on the Conscience—Dull Perception—The Dog and the Naturalist—Cold Affections—The Intermitting Fountain—The Disposition to ask Wrong Things, and to ask Right Things in a Wrong Way.

"Oh thou that hearest prayer."—PSALM lxv. 2.

"Jesus is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—HEB. vii. 25.

"The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—ROM. viii. 26.

THE only proper object of worship is God, the living and true God, Triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. According to the nature of the blessings implored or the mercies acknowledged, we have instances of prayer addressed to all the Persons of the blessed Godhead; but the tenor of Scripture shows that in the economy of grace,

prayer is usually addressed to the Father through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost. God in Christ is the object of Christian worship, and the author of that worship is the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ.

I. The Hearer of Prayer.

Dear friends, I am not sure that you all have a distinct conviction of the power of prayer. I am not sure that you all have that confidence in its efficacy, which makes prayer an interesting exercise on ordinary occasions, or a natural and hopeful resource on occasions of perplexity and alarm. As the result of your own musings, or of others' reasonings, you may either have ceased to pray, or you may pray despondingly, as very doubtful if prayer has any power at all, or your so-called prayer may be a series of devout ascriptions without containing a single earnest supplication. I shall quote a prayer found among the papers of one of the most amiable of worldly philanthropists, as well as one of the most talented of modern jurists. In the single element of gratitude for temporal blessings, it so far surpasses the prayers of many Christians, that we cannot but grieve that it wants what no Christian prayer should want—"the offering of *desires* unto God in the name of Christ."

"Almighty God! Creator of all things! the source of all wisdom, and goodness, and virtue, and happiness, I bow down before thee—not to offer up prayers, for I dare not presume to think or hope that thy most just, unerring, and supreme will can be in any degree influenced by any supplications of mine—nor to pour forth praises and adorations, for I feel that I am unworthy to offer them—but in all humility, and with a deep sense of my own insignificance, to express the thanks of a happy and contented being, for the innumerable benefits which he enjoys. I cannot reflect that I am a human being, living in civilized society, born the member of a free state, the son of virtuous and

tender parents, blest with an ample fortune, endowed with faculties which have enabled me to acquire that fortune myself, enjoying a fair reputation, beloved by my relations, esteemed by my friends, thought well of by most of my countrymen to whom my name is known, united to a kind, virtuous, enlightened, and most affectionate wife, the father of seven children, all in perfect health, and all giving by the goodness of their dispositions, a promise of future excellence, and though myself far advanced in life, yet still possessed of health and strength which seem to afford me the prospect of future years of enjoyment. I cannot reflect on all these things and not express my gratitude to thee, O God! from whom all this good has flowed. I am sincerely grateful for all this happiness. I am sincerely grateful for the happiness of all those who are most dear to me, of my beloved wife, of my sweet children, of my relations, and of my friends.

"I prostrate myself, O Almighty and Omniscient God, before thee. In endeavouring to contemplate thy divine attributes, I seek to elevate my soul towards thee; I seek to improve and ennoble my faculties, and to strengthen and quicken my ardour for the public good; and I appear to myself to rise above my earthly existence, while I am indulging the hope that I may at some time prove an humble instrument in the divine work of enlarging the sphere of human happiness."*

This is the thankful but melancholy prayer of a man as virtuous, and, we may add, as devout as any man can be, who has not the clear convictions and lively hopes of a believer in Jesus. But even in this act of devotion he does not venture to offer up a single petition—for he does not think that the will of the Almighty can in any way be influenced by any supplication of his. And what this gifted lawyer wrote in his meditative retirement, others tacitly

* "Life of Sir S. Romilly," vol. iii., p. 76.

think, or openly avow. They feel as if the creation were so vast, and its concerns so multifarious, that it is impossible that even Omniscience can have an ear for all their petitions. Or they feel that the Creator is so exalted—his throne so high and lifted up—that it is not fit for them to approach it. Or they feel that the laws of nature are so fixed, and the decrees of the Eternal so determinate, that it is only presumption to expect that any earnestness or importunity of theirs can alter them. Such thoughts do arise in some men's hearts. By some they are sported flippantly, by others they are felt painfully; but they are as erroneous as they are fatal to hope and effort; as preposterous as they are paralyzing; and a few considerations, carefully pondered, may, by the blessing of God, set the mind conclusively at rest on this and like misgivings.

And first of all, it must be remembered, that the human mind has a much greater talent at asking questions than at answering them, and many minds have a greater propensity to raise doubts and start difficulties, than to repose in that scanty measure of truth which is already ascertained and infallible. I am speaking not of things *necessary*, but of things *contingent*; and by truth ascertained and infallible, I mean knowledge which does not rest on mere *opinion*, but knowledge which comes to us in the shape of *information*. Anything which I am told by a credible witness is information, and so is anything which comes to my knowledge through any of my own five senses, and so is any knowledge that I gain directly by attending to the processes and feelings of my own mind. But any notion which does not come from one or other of these three legitimate sources—sensation, consciousness, or competent testimony—is good for nothing. It may be an ingenious hypothesis, or a plausible opinion, but it is not matter of fact; it is not information. Till it assume a positive form it is not knowledge, and I have no security for its eventual truth.

Now, excepting mathematical truth, which has no connection with the present subject, we repeat, that the human mind can attain no sure and infallible knowledge, except that which it gets in the positive form; that knowledge for which it has the evidence of its own senses or personal consciousness, or the senses and consciousness of others. Beyond this the human mind cannot go. If they be not the limited facts which we have discovered for ourselves, for all beyond we are at the mercy of others who know better than ourselves—that is, of others who have seen and felt and handled what we have not—and to expect to come at absolute knowledge in any other way is to expect an impossibility. The hawk may fly higher than the sparrow, and the eagle, again, may soar above them both, but none of them can rise beyond the atmosphere. A European may know more than a savage, and a scholar may know more than either; but none of them can know for certain anything except *facts*, which they have observed for themselves, or facts which have been revealed to them by others.

But whilst these are the limits of human certainty, they are not the limits of human curiosity. In our anxiety to be wise, beyond what is ascertainable, we have invented a transcendental Metaphysics,—a science on which the acutest of human intellects have bestowed themselves, and to whose literature some of the most eloquent argument and finest fancy of ancient times and modern has been contributed—but a science which, amidst all its curious questions and doubtsome answers — the accumulation of two thousand years—has not added a single atom to the domain of ascertained truth or actual knowledge. If you could conceive the fowls of heaven suddenly seized with a strong desire to get away from this globe altogether—if you could imagine them all at different elevations in the atmosphere, according to the strength of their pinions, or the lightness of their forms, but all, beak uppermost, struggling and fluttering,

and screwing their way a little and a little higher in the rarified medium, you would have a very exact idea of the object of metaphysical inquiry, and the position of its several votaries. Its object is to ascertain truths regarding which we have no information, and there may doubtless be many such truths—but are they ascertainable? There are other planets besides this one, and we have supposed the case of the fowls of heaven wishing to reach them—but are they accessible? A bird of powerful pinion, or singular lightness, may rise a mile above his fluttering competitors, and as an affair of ærial gymnastics, the fruitless effort may be good practice; but the wing which is farthest above the surface is still a thousand times farther from the next nearest world; and so in the metaphysical contest to get away from the regions of absolute information—the *terra firma* of positive truth, there has been a wonderful display of mental power and buoyancy, but the subtile spirit which has mounted the highest above the ascertained and the actual of our restricted humanity, is still infinitely distant from the next nearest domain of knowledge. As some one has truly remarked, "To know more, we first must be more."*

It is not a popular doctrine, but it is one to which the world is slowly coming round—of contingent truth we can know nothing regarding which we have not positive information, and beyond these limits to wonder what things there are, or how such and such things can be, is to vex ourselves in vain. Those things which I have observed for myself, and those which others have told me, make up a solid basis of truth—a *terra firma* of fact. If I am dissatisfied with its narrow limits, I may fling myself over into the abyss of speculation, and finding in every deep a deeper still, perish at last in total scepticism; or I may try to soar upwards into a transcendental region, and after fruitless efforts to be

* Lewis' "History of Philosophy."

wise beyond my nature's capacity, be content to fold my weary pinions at last on the homely landing-place of common sense and tangible truth. There, and there only, on the solid ground of information, on the firm footing of what I have observed for myself, or others have told me, can I find a permanent rest for my spirit, and a secure starting-point for eternity.

Applying these principles to the case before us, we do not ask what anterior probabilities are there that prayer is heard and answered, but what proof? Can we say from our own experience, or have we reason to believe, on competent authority, that prayer has actual power?

Now, it is conclusive on the entire subject, that for the efficacy of prayer we have the assurance of God himself. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will answer thee." And lest we should desire more definite information, we have it. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." There was once amongst us one who knew precisely the reception which prayers are wont to meet with in the Court of Heaven. There was once on earth one who could testify, on this matter, what he had seen, and who could tell distinctly whether the prayers of earth are audible in the upper sanctuary, and how far the high and holy One is disposed to regard and answer them; and nothing can be more encouraging than the language of this faithful Witness. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." "I say unto you, that if two of you

shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

So conclusive are these and similar declarations, that no farther warrant should be needful to give precision and hopeful earnestness to our petitions. We have the living God himself assuring us that he is prepared to accept, and consider, and answer them; and we have the Son of God himself come down from the bosom of the Father, the appointed medium of communication betwixt heaven and earth. We have the Intercessor himself declaring, that no petition passes through his hand but it brings back its blessing; and farther assurances than these should scarcely be needful to make the man who is conscious of sincerity in prayer, secure of an answer. But farther assurance is given. It should be enough that we have historic evidence that the Lord has promised to answer prayer; but, over and above, we have historic evidence that, times almost unnumbered, he *has* answered it. In the lives of Abraham and Abraham's servant, of Lot, of Jacob, of Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah and Samson, of Hannah and of Samuel, of David the king and Solomon his son, Hezekiah and Manasseh, of the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel; then, again, in the history of the apostles and the early Church,* we have abundant evidence that, whatever may have become of our own, others have directed prevailing supplications to the Heavenly Majesty, and that

* See Fincher's "Achievements of Prayer,"—a delightful work containing in the words of Scripture the different prayers with their answers as recorded there.

singular mercies have been, from time to time, bestowed in answer to believing prayer.

And here you would not wonder though we should close the case. Having God's promise and the Saviour's assurance of the prevalency of prayer, and having, both in the sacred narrative and later histories, so many cases recorded of accepted and answered supplications, there is enough to justify the conclusion, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. But there is an evidence, to most minds more satisfactory than the most harmonious testimony—I mean, the evidence of personal consciousness — the proof they have from their own experience. There have been persons who possessed this proof; and I believe almost every Christian could make, at some stage of his progress, the same entry in his journal as John Newton,* when he wrote:—"About this time I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer." We believe that to most real Christians here present, the whole discussion of this subject will be superfluous, and, so far as they are personally concerned, uninteresting; for their short argument in favour of the practice, and conclusive answer to all objections, is the Psalmist's own:—"But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer." The efficacy of prayer is with them no longer a matter of probability, or a subject for reasoning. It is now a matter of fact—an ascertained and positive truth—a truth not even of others' testimony, but a fact of their own consciousness. And so, readers, if you wish to have your minds set conclusively at rest on the subject, like the Psalmist, pray—pray till, like the Psalmist, you can sing—"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live."

And now, having put on its proper footing, as a matter

* Quoted in M'Gill on "Secret Prayer."

of fact, the truth that God is the hearer of prayer, the speculative difficulties with which some have perplexed the subject need give us no pain. If the truth be *ascertained*, and the mind of the man who has discovered it be sound and vigorous, no difficulties will disturb his faith. To use the words of a clear thinker,*—"Before a confessed and unconquerable difficulty, the mind, if in a healthy state, reposes as quietly as when in possession of a discovered truth—as quietly and contentedly as we are accustomed to bear that law of our nature, which denies us the power of seeing through all space, or of being exempt from sickness and decay." Allow that some serious objections could be started against the efficacy of prayer, these objections do not touch the evidence on which we believe that God has promised to hear prayer, nor that other evidence on which we believe that he has actually heard and answered it. The greatness of creation and the littleness of man, the decrees of God and the immutability of natural laws, would not stop his prayer, nor startle from his knees the man who could say—"Verily, God hath heard me: he hath attended to the voice of my petition;" but superior to all speculative difficulties, because secure in his experimental knowledge, that wise and happy man would still pray on. And to see the wisdom of his course, you have only to put a parallel case. In the infinite variety of this universe, there may be a world where the processes of growth, and decay, and reproduction, so familiar to us, are utterly unknown. Suppose that the inhabitant of such a world were transported to our own, and that he witnessed the husbandman's operations in spring. He might marvel what he meant. He might wonder why he cast these grains of corn into the ground; and, when told that it was with a view to re-produce them a hundred-fold, the mysterious process might at once assume the aspect of infatuation, and he

* Arnold's "Sermons on Interpretation of Scripture," p. 147.

might begin to remonstrate with the labourer on this crazy waste of useful corn; and if this visitor from Jupiter or Saturn were as acute a metaphysician as many in our own world are, he might adduce many subtile arguments—too subtile, perhaps, for a farmer to refute. "Is not this a mad notion of yours? Do you really mean to affirm, that this particle of corn will grow into a hundred more? Nay, do you pretend to say that you will put into that hole this hard and husky atom, and come back in three months and find it changed into the glossy stems, the waving leaves, and rustling ears, of the tall wheat-stalk? What resemblance, or what adequacy, is there between that seed and a sheaf of corn? Besides, if a buried grain is to grow up a hundredfold, why don't you bury diamonds and guineas, and get them multiplied after the same proportion? Besides, O simpleton! do you not know that all these matters have been fixed and settled from everlasting? It has been foreordained, either that you are to have a crop next autumn, or that you are to have none. In the former case, your present pains are needless, for you will get your harvest without all this ado. If the latter, your pains are useless, for nothing will procure you a crop, where it is not the purpose of Omnipotence that you should have one." Did the ploughman listen to all this remonstrance, he might be much perplexed with it. He might not be able to show the precise way in which seeds exert an efficacy on the future crop; and he might not see at once the reason why corn-grains should be reproductive, whilst diamonds and guineas are not; and, least of all, might he be able to dispose of the fatalist objection. But he would deem it enough to refute all this mystification to say—that he had never known a harvest without a seed-time, and that he had never sown sufficiently without reaping something. And so, when a man comes in from the prayerless world, and starts his objections, a praying man may not be able to discuss them one by one; he

may not even understand them—"But this I know, God is the hearer of prayer, and, verily, he hath heard even me." And like the farmer, who scatters his seed heedless of all that has ever been said on necessity, and causation, and general laws, a wise believer will, in the face of hypothetic difficulties, proceed on ascertained facts, and, amidst objections and cavils, will persist to pray, and continue to enjoy the blessings which prayer procures.

Though hitherto I have not touched these theoretic difficulties, I may now, in conclusion, mention three simple truths, in whose successive light every doubt and difficulty should melt away. God is the hearer of prayer—

1. Because he is the living God.
2. Because he is almighty.
3. Because he is the God of love.

1. Jehovah is the living God. "The tendency of many minds is to regard the Deity as a principle rather than as a person."* They look upon him as a power, a presence, a principle, the most general of general laws, not as the great I AM, the living God. No wonder that they have little heart to pray. If Elijah had known no other deity than the little cloud, or the sea from which it ascended, or the sky in which it floated, or the electric action which condensed more and more dark vapour round it, he would scarcely have renewed his supplication seven times. But he addressed himself not to clouds, but to the living God of Israel. When I go to my friend's house to procure some favour from him, I do not speak to his books or his furniture; I do not invoke his genius or guardian spirit; I do not apostrophise the abstract idea of benevolence, or virtue, or friendship; but I speak direct to himself. A lowly friend, it may be, or an unworthy suppliant—but still a living man, I address a living person. Prayer is not an appeal to dead matter, or to general laws. It is not a request to the rain

* Chalmers's "Natural Theology," vol. ii. p. 315.

to fall, or to the sun to stand still. It is not imploring the principle of gravitation to relax its rule on my behalf, and disengage my feet from the earth, or beseeching the fire to forbear and not burn me. It is not to supplicate such virtues as meekness, and patience, and fortitude, to come down and take up their abode in my bosom. But when I pray I address myself to that living God, who has the elements of nature at his control, and what is to me, as an immortal and accountable being, far more important, who has at his disposal infinite resources for making his creatures holy. He is the *living* God; and if, in asking mercies from him, I may not be as sanguine as a friend when he entreats a friend, or a child when he importunes a father, I may at least be as earnest and urgent as a subject is when he has opportunity to ply his suit with his living sovereign.

2. But some who restrain prayer do err from not knowing the power of God. They feel as if it were impossible even for Omniscience to attend to every suppliant, and beyond the power even of Omnipotence to bestow a separate boon in answer to each petition. Or they feel as if they were only the more important requests of the more eminent suitors that are likely to be noticed and conceded. But what is Omnipotence? Is it not the power of attending to all things undistracted, as well as of doing the mightiest things unexhausted? The Almighty—is he not able to attend to all the wants of all his creatures? Is there in creation aught that would lead us to suppose that to his comprehensive eye any grandeur is imposing, or any minuteness despicable? Did he only create the suns and larger planets, and leave it to moons and little worlds to create themselves? Or, coming down to this lower world, did he bestow a higher finish on the bulkier existences, and show little care for the lesser and lower? Was he rejoicing in the greatness of his strength when he formed the oak and the lion, and had his arm grown weary when it reached the lily and the nightin-

gale? Though there were no Bible to proclaim it, there is evidence enough—whether we look up into the heavens with their circling worlds, or down into a drop of water with its myriad of gay darting monads—proof enough that He who *made* the whole of such a universe is able to *attend* to it all. There is proof enough that no multitude of suppliants can distract him, and no magnitude of their requests exhaust him. There is proof enough that if any prayer be unanswered, it is not because the offerer was too little, nor because he asked too much.

3. And others err, forgetting God's goodness. True, Jehovah may be the living God, and a God of boundless power; but what if he be a hard master or an angry king? What if we ourselves have put him in an attitude of estrangement, and the same breath which addresses him in the language of entreaty, what if it has previously assailed the High and Holy One in tones of hostility? Here does come in a difficulty on which conjecture could only throw a more perplexing light. The hearer of prayer, is he not also the hater of sin? And coming into his presence, instead of procuring blessings, may I not be provoking a more swift displeasure? Here is indeed a difficulty—the gloomier alternative of which our own guilty consciences too severely favour, and from which we should have found no sure escape, had not the heavenly High Priest, reposing in the Father's love, and holding out to his guilty brethren his hand of mediation, said, "After this manner pray ye, '*Our Father*, which art in heaven.'"

Nothing shows so strikingly that God is willing to hear and answer prayer as the provision he has made for its acceptable and effectual presentation. However worthless the suppliant, he may present his petition in the name of God's beloved Son; and however dim his ideas and powerless his expressions, he may obtain as the instigator of his desires and the guide of his devotion, none other than the Spirit of God.

II. The Intercessor Above.

Where prayer is offered in Jesus' name, he maketh intercession with the Father.

Jesus sits on the Father's right hand, and there he intercedes for his people. This is just the sequel and continuation of redemption. Just as God's providence is the preserving of his creation, once he has formed it, so Christ's intercession is the preserving of his church, now that he has bought it. The Mediator's presence within the veil secures the perseverance of his people till they too be within it. For Christ maketh intercession for us. He sees some Peter at this moment about to be sifted as wheat, and he prays that his faith fail not. He sees a child of light walking in darkness, or some forlorn disciple like to faint by the way, and he prays the Father, and he sends the Comforter. He sees a band of sore-tempted disciples. He espies a Lot in Sodom, or a Daniel in the den—a Joseph in Egypt, or a saint in Sardis, and he says, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. Keep them from the evil." He sees a believer waxing formal and cold, restraining prayer and disrelishing the word; and he says, "Sanctify them through thy truth; and then the sickness comes which drives him back to the throne of grace, or the sorrow which sends him to the word again; and finding out a multitude of undetected sins and lacking graces, the believer is sanctified anew. And oh! He rises eagerly from his royal seat, for yonder is a believer dying; he "stands"* up at the right hand of God, for a Stephen is about to fall on sleep, and the Intercessor cries, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." The Father wills, and the Lord Jesus receives that spirit.

* Acts vii. 56.

But although, so to speak, on the part of God, "all things are ready;" though he sits on his throne of grace, and though the Mediator waits with his golden censer to receive and then to offer up the prayers of sinners here on earth—all things are not ready on the part of the sinner. Diffidence God-ward, dimness of perception, coldness of desire, perversity of will, and distraction of spirit are all so many "infirmities" under which each petitioner labours; and it is for the "help" of these "infirmities" that the God of grace has provided not only an Advocate above, but a prompter within.

III. The Prompter Within.

The Holy Spirit guides the thoughts and instigates the desires—he helps the infirmities of believers when they pray.

1. Guilt on the conscience is one great hindrance to prayer. When sin is recent—when, like Adam skulking among the trees, the bitter-sweet of the forbidden fruit is still present to his taste, and his newly-opened eyes are aghast at his own deformity—it is not natural for the self-condemned transgressor to draw near to God. And it is not till the Spirit of God directs his view to the unnoticed sacrifice, and encourages him to put on the robe of God's providing, that the abashed and trembling criminal can venture back into God's presence. And it is not till the Spirit of God comes forth into his soul, and begins to cry "Abba" there, that the soul goes forth with alacrity to meet a reconciled God. To reveal the great High Priest, the daysman betwixt infinite holiness and human vileness — to open heaven and display Jesus standing at the right hand of God —to impart confidence in the finished work, and so, amidst abounding guilt, to give hope to prayer—is His work who, when he is come, convinces not only of sin, but of righteousness.*

* John xvi. 8.

2. Another great hindrance to prayer is dimness of spiritual perception. When a man of taste or science climbs a mountain in a bright, transparent day, he rejoices in its goodly prospect or curious spoils; but his dog feels no interest in them. He sees the philosopher peering through his telescope, or exploring for the little plants that grow near the summit, or splintering the rocks and putting fragments in the bag; but it never occurs to the spaniel so much as to marvel what his master is finding there. He sits yawning and panting on a sunny knoll, or snaps at the mountain-bee as it comes sailing past him, or chases the conies back into their holes, and scampers down, with noisy glee, as soon as the sad durance is over. The disparity between the philosopher and his irrational friend is hardly greater than it is between the believer and the worldling when you bring them together into the domain of faith. "The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," and on the Pisgah of the same revelation whence the believer descries a goodly land, and where he is making the most interesting discoveries, the other sees nothing to arrest his attention. The word of God and its promises—the throne of grace and its privileges—the things of faith in all their varieties—have no existence to worldly men. And when constrained to bear others company in outward ordinances, they are thankful when the ended prayer or the closing sanctuary sends them back to the world again. But just as the same lover of nature might ascend his favourite eminence on a future day, and find all his goodly prospects intercepted by a baffling mist, so dense that, except a pebble here and there, he can alight on none of its rare productions, and without any opening vista by which he can catch a glimpse of the fair regions around: so the believer may ascend the hill of God—he may open his Bible or enter his closet—and find, alas! that it is a foggy day, the beauteous panorama blotted out, and himself left to grope chillily in

the cold and perplexing gloom. But, like a gale of summer wind upspringing and lifting all the fog from the mountain top, the breath of the omnipotent Spirit can scatter every cloud and leave the soul on a pinnacle of widest survey, rejoicing in the purest light of God.

3. A third infirmity of the saints, and a great hindrance to prayer, is the feebleness of affection God-ward. Human affection is an intermitting spring. Even though the covert streams which feed it should be always flowing, it is only now and then, when the fountain is filled up to the brim, that there is a momentary overflow. There may be a very deep attachment between the members of a family; and yet it is only on some casual occasion—the day of their reunion after long separation, or the eve of parting, or one of those propitious seasons when people realize how happy is their lot—that the fountain overflows and they give utterance to their irrepressible emotions. But owing to this deficiency of ardour—this unfrequency of their fits of fervent affection—it comes to pass that the members of a harmonious family will be much together, and yet not take full advantage of their opportunities of mutual intercourse, nor grow remarkably in mutual acquaintance or mutual endearment. This infirmity of human affection extends into the realm of faith. There is a real affection on the part of the believer toward his Father in heaven; but it is often latent—often languid —not always welling up and flowing over—and it often requires some special incident of mercy or of judgment to swell it up to that point which makes him conscious of its presence. Just as separations, threatened or actual, bring out the love of friends to one another, so a decree, like that of Darius interdicting prayer, or a flight, like that of David from the house of God to the land of Jordan, brings out the believer's love to his heavenly Father—reveals it to himself. And just as sudden acts of kindness surprise former friends into a fonder and more outspoken

affection, so the unlooked-for arrival of some astounding mercy will startle the believer into such thankfulness or self-abasement as will transport him instantly to the throne of grace. But, even apart from any present visitation of judgment or mercy, there are influences which will, from time to time, surcharge the believing soul with gratitude, or adoration, or earnestness after God; and, just as in life's daily tenor there are auspicious moments when memory or an open eye discloses, in all the zest of novelty, the excellence of a familiar friend, so there are genial hours in the believer's history when the Spirit, the enlightener and remembrancer, brings to view such attractions in that all-sufficient Friend whom we so readily forget, that the enraptured soul looks on and wonders, and desires no greater blessedness. Reverting to our original emblem—as the intermitting fountain takes a long interval to fill it in a dry and sultry season, but fills the faster and overflows the oftener as the mountain is bathed in abundant dews, and may at last, amidst the plenteous rain, become a constant stream; so, as the believer's heart is filled with more rapid love and joy by the Spirit's plentiful down-pouring, the rare and intermitting spring of supplication flows more frequently, till, anon, it becomes, not a daily, but a constant emanation, and that full-souled and heaven-replenished saint has learned to "pray without ceasing."

4. Another infirmity of the saints is a disposition to ask wrong things. We know not what to pray for as we ought. The blessings for which it is most natural to pray, are those which we least need—temporal mercies. There are often an urgency and importunity for these, strangely disproportionate to the earnestness with which we beg the better gifts. Sometimes the believer prays the Lord that the thorn in the flesh may depart from him, far more eagerly than he asks that sufficient grace which will make the thorn no longer painful, or even will enable him to glory in infirmity.

Again, amongst spiritual mercies, believers do not always covet most earnestly the best gifts, or the gifts which in their circumstances would be best for them. It was good for Peter and James and John to be on the holy mount, and they prayed to tarry there. But it was good for the world, and eventually good for themselves, that they were obliged to come down. It is natural for believers to covet rapture and elevation more intensely than hard labour and hazardous testimonies for Jesus, and a toilsome pilgrimage through a hostile world—but for both themselves and that world, it is better that they should go down to active service—remembering, however, what they heard and saw when they were with Jesus on the mount.

But the Holy Spirit knows the actual state of each. He knows what spiritual blessings the suppliant really needs, and what temporal mercies it would be no eventual blessing for him to attain. If it be a dangerous temporal good, he can wean the soul from the vehement desire of it; or by exhibiting some surpassing heavenly good can awaken such longings after *that*, as will make the other be forgotten; or by simply reconciling the soul to the adorable will of God, can make it content to merge its own instinctive longings in his majestic sovereignty. Then again he can so reveal to the soul its actual necessities, that praying time will not be expended in imploring undesired mercies, or confessing unfelt deficiency. He knows the things which accord with the will of God, and teaches the petitioner to ask those blessings in asking which he can plead God's precept or God's promise.

5. A fifth infirmity of the saints is that, even when asking right things, they do not ask in a manner agreeable to the will of God. Some are haunted by worldly and frivolous thoughts in prayer, and feel as if their minds were never so silly and trifling, so cloddish and carnal, as when they attempt to pray. It would seem as if all the vanities

of the week came crowding into their minds; as if on signal given—the moment they went upon their knees—and petitions for the most stupendous blessings will be ascending, without force or meaning, through a swarm of idle fancies and vagrant thoughts. Or perhaps, amidst greater composure of spirit, there may be little or no longing after the blessing asked. The suppliant begs it, not so much because he appreciates or desires it, as because he thinks it dutiful to make mention of it, and after a formal enumeration of unsought mercies, he goes his way without having actually lodged one prevailing request—one effectual, fervent prayer before the throne of grace. Or perhaps amidst considerable earnestness and urgency, the believer is embarrassed and distressed by the unsuitableness of his thoughts—his mean conceptions of those unspeakable benefits for which he is entreating, and his unworthy thoughts of that God with whom he has to do. Now, for all these distractions in sacred duties, the remedy lies with the Spirit himself. We can shut to the door; but he can shut the heart, and lock out the world and all its phantoms. We can open the Bible and look at the promises; but he can open heaven and show each promise in its glorious fulfilment. We can lift our eyes towards the hills; but he can show us "Him who is invisible," and can enable our souls to rest on him with the sweetest security for the fulfilment of all that he has spoken. We can task ourselves to stated times of devotion, and resolve that we shall spend a given space in prayer; but he can so enlarge the heart—he can make the spirit so strong in the Lord and in the power of his might—he can fill the mind with such longings after angelic purity—such delight in heavenly things—such vehement aspirations after God; he can intercede within us with those yearnings and groanings which cannot be uttered, so that hours and minutes shall not be counted, and the untiring soul continues "instant in prayer."

PRAYER TO BE OFFERED THROUGH A MEDIATOR.

All acceptable prayer is offered through Jesus Christ as the only Mediator between God and man. In his absolute character, as Ruler of the universe, we could expect no mercy at the hands of our Maker. The inflexible rectitude of his moral government, is in itself supremely excellent, and to all holy and righteous beings must be a source of profound satisfaction, and of adoring praise. But with sinners who have already broken the divine law, and exposed themselves to its curse, the case is widely different. From absolute justice they have nothing to expect but punishment. It is no comfort to them to say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" for to do merely what is right with sinners, must be to punish them.

We need not here dwell on the miserable condition in which man must have existed, but for the intervention of the Saviour, nor upon the certain condemnation which must have frowned upon him, at once from the character, the government, and the law of God. Neither shall we wait to expatiate on the glorious truth that a Daysman has been provided, who lays his hand upon both parties, who effects a reconciliation between the offended God, and the poor guilty offending creature. But what we wish to advert to particularly, is, that Christ has not only satisfied the claims of eternal justice, and delivered his people from that condemnation which their sins had merited, but has provided for them a way of access to the throne of God. Through the same Saviour in whom God is revealed to us, is he also revealed as the Hearer of prayer. A scheme having been devised

and executed, by the provisions of which He who is absolutely just becomes the justifier of the ungodly, we can understand how man can hold intercourse with the great Jehovah and yet live. As Moses, on one particular occasion, acted the part of a typical mediator between God and the children of Israel, so Jesus is the true Mediator between the eternal Lawgiver and his worshippers in every age. He is the Prophet like unto Moses, to whom sinners, alarmed by the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, may still say, "Speak thou with us, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exodus xx. 19. This is he of whom Moses said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken: according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord thy God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not."

The privilege of access to God through a Mediator, was variously and most significantly typified in the Old Testament worship. Jehovah was represented as sitting on the mercy-seat, and dwelling between the cherubim, where he heard the prayers of his people, and accepted of their worship. This mercy-seat, composed of solid gold, covering the ark of the covenant with the ten commandments, situated in the most holy place, overshadowed by the cherubim of glory, and distinguished by the Shekinah, or visible symbol of the divine presence, was itself an eminent type of Christ, "whom," the apostle informs us, "God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." Rom. iii. 25. With what propriety does Jesus therefore say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." John xiv. 6. As the high-priest under the law entered once every year into the most holy place with the sprinkling of blood, and the burning of incense, so Jesus Christ, our

great New Testament High Priest, has entered within the veil, even into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. It is on this ground that we are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace, to approach with confidence by that new and living way which he hath consecrated. How encouraging the declaration of the apostle John, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father!" 1 John ii. 1. This precious truth should be realized by us in all our approaches to God. We have a friend at the court of heaven, a faithful, tender-hearted, yet powerful friend, a Saviour in our own nature, one with us in covenant, in interest, in feeling, a High Priest who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, acquainted with what it is to be surrounded with miseries and dangers, and to pray for deliverance. Have we not cause to fear that one reason why our prayers seem so feeble and powerless, and attended with so little sensible comfort and advantage, is, that we do not take sufficient care to draw near to God in that only way by which he is accessible, even by faith in the Lord Jesus? It is only as connected with Christ, that the promises of the divine word are to be understood, and made use of in prayer. And the book of Psalms, as containing the most precious promises often presented to us in the very form of petitions, becomes yet dearer and sweeter when received as expressing the feelings and desires of Him who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. These desires, these feelings we are also encouraged to entertain and to express in the same language. Thus Jesus is at once our covenant-head, and our forerunner; he gives us a legal title to the promises, and by his own example he teaches us how to use these promises.—*McGill on Secret Prayer.*

No. 169.

DEVOUT MEDITATION.

The closet duties of religion are reading the Scriptures, prayer, praise, self-examination, and devout meditation. The manner in which these are performed, evinces the state of piety in successive generations. The closet is the standing test of spirituality. Of all the secret duties of religion none is more slighted than that last named. We frequently hear pulpit discourses on devout reading, on prayer, on praise, and on self-examination; but meditation is not very much urged.

This duty is of great importance. Most men would do better if they would think more and speak less. Many would be gainers if they would hear or read less, and reflect more. This is true in common affairs; in religion it is so with emphasis. Our liveliness in God's service greatly depends on our habits of meditation. This duty neglected, hearing good sermons is chiefly an intellectual operation. He who reads without reflection, will not grow wiser. But

> —— meditation
> May think down hours to moments. The heart
> May give most useful lessons to the head,
> And learning wiser grow without his books.

Without meditation prayer is languid, praise heartless, and all religious duties comparatively unprofitable. Without digestion food cannot nourish the body. Without meditation there is no thriving Christian. Seed scattered in the field will be picked up by the fowls of heaven, unless it is

harrowed in. Truth must be buried in the soul by meditation.

Candour will not conceal that meditation is a very difficult duty. In divine things, our minds and hearts are like the wild ass's colt. Philip Henry said: "It is easier to go six miles to hear a sermon, than to spend one quarter of an hour in meditating on it when I have come home." We naturally like to rove about unrestrained. To fix our minds on any theme of contemplation is irksome. To fix it on divine truth is repugnant to the carnal heart. The flesh always pleads for looseness. Law, rule, restraint, awaken thoughts of rebellion.

We should gird ourselves to this work. We must purpose to do it. We must form the habit of doing it. We must take heed how we perform it. We must be solicitous to succeed in it. We must pray for a blessing on it. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." No man can perform this duty aright without carefulness and earnest prayer to God. By the grace of God we triumph mightily. Without that, we always come short.

This, like other closet duties, is pleasant and profitable in proportion to the frequency with which it is performed. This is an old secret of the righteous. "O, how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day." An occasional glance at divine things is a poor substitute for steady, oft-repeated meditations. In this duty, "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." Never hastily give up a good train of thought. Persevere.

Our meditations should not be hurried. Their very nature requires deliberation. Let us weigh matters. It is very solemn work to look at eternal things. Bennet says: "Meditation is a fixed solemn survey, or consideration of some subject of religion, in order to raise the affections,

form pious resolutions, improve the mind, and converse with God." The frivolous bring guilt, not profit, to their own souls, by their pretences in this duty. The Lord is a great God. He is greatly to be feared. "Be still, and know that I am God." Vain minds to vain things; but let not our thoughts of God be dashed with pertness.

Our meditations should also be earnest. "When I mused, the fire burned." Cold thoughts about the love of God are as much out of place, as warm thoughts about the vanities of earth. In our trains of reflection, we should call on our souls, and all that is within us, to be stirred up to look and wonder, to love and admire, to praise and adore.

The time of meditation may be any hour. Isaac chose the twilight. Gen. xxiv. 63. David chose "all the day long," and "the night watches." Midnight, cock-crow, morning, night, or noon, are all fit times. Days of affliction, and days of deliverance, should not be allowed to pass unimproved. No Sabbath should pass without some serious attempts at this duty. It is also well when we can break the chain of worldliness, which often binds us, by glancing our eyes upwards, by thinking on the name of the Lord our God. True piety unfits the mind for no duty, for no lawful pleasure.

The place of meditation may be any spot. Isaac chose the field. Gen. xxiv. 63. Our closets, our firesides, our beds, the wayside, a valley, a mountain, a palace, a prison, a grove, a garden, are all suitable. God is not confined to holy places. His grace is rich, free, abundant. It breaks over all limits of canons and rubrics.

Any divine truth is a fit theme for devout meditation. God himself is the sum and substance of pious thoughts. "I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." Psa. lxiii. 6. "I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." Psa. civ. 33, 34.

Would you know much of this matchless one? Court thoughts of him. "Meditation is the soul's telescope, whereby, in her long remove, she discerneth God and heaven, as though they were nigh at hand." Think much of Jehovah. "He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deut. xxxii. 4. No man cherishes reverential thoughts of the blessed and only Potentate with too much delight. "If we have God in all things while they are ours, we shall have all things in God when they are taken away." He is the portion of his people.

We should also meditate much upon Christ, his two natures, his one person, his pre-existent glory, his incarnation, his example, his sufferings, his death, burial and resurrection, his ascension, his sitting at God's right hand, his offices, his love, and his coming to judge the world. He is an ever fruitful and glorious theme. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Heb. xii. 1–3.

We should often think of the person, glory, work, love, and offices of the Spirit. Without his help we always fail. Christ is our advocate above. The Spirit is our advocate within us. He indites our petitions. The Saviour presents them, perfumed with his merits. The Spirit is the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Reprover, the Encourager, the Illuminator, the Teacher, the Sanctifier. His grace makes all burdens light. His presence turns all duties into pleasures. Under his teaching, self-denial is preferred to self-indulgence. Sinking nature finds his support infallible.

God's works of creation are proper subjects on which to

look and meditate. "I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon, and the stars, which thou hast made." Why should we not contemplate the blazing universe above us? "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Why should we not study our curious frames? "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Why should we not be fond of flowers? "Behold the lilies. They toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Our Saviour had a taste for all that was beautiful and wonderful in creation. Let us be like him. "I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands."

Nor should we neglect God's works of providence. His counsels are of old, faithfulness and truth; and his providence is but the execution of his counsels. His kingdom ruleth over all. His authority is over all worlds, all agents, all causes, all effects, all creatures, all destinies. "In all his dispensations God is at work for our good. In prosperity he tries our gratitude; in mediocrity, our contentment; in misfortune, our submission; in darkness, our faith; under temptation, our steadfastness; and, at all times, our obedience and trust in him." His way is in the deep, and his path in the great waters. He made them. "Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Psa. xcvii. Blessed is he who has been to school to Providence, and learned his lesson well. "I will remember the works of the Lord: surely, I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings." Psa. lxxvii. 11, 12.

In fine, devout meditation should seek its themes in all the Scriptures. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that

is written therein: for thou shalt then make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Josh. i. 8. Who is the good man? He whose "delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Psa. i. 2. David says: "I will meditate in thy precepts;" "thy servant did meditate in thy statutes;" "I will meditate in thy statutes;" "mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." Psa. cxix. 15, 23, 48, 148. Let the word of God dwell in you richly.

To a meditative mind every season may suggest good topics. It is wise to understand the times in which we live. In affliction think of sin, its guilt, its vileness; of the debt of gratitude we owe for past mercies; of the load of ingratitude chargeable to us; of the sufferings of good men in former days; of the anguish of the Redeemer; and of the glory that shall follow a life of patient endurance. Are you about to come to the Lord's table? let your mind dwell on the truths contained in the last chapters of the Gospels. Improve each season, each trial, each moment.

Though we may distinguish, we must not separate meditation from the other duties of the closet. He who loves this duty, will delight in reading the sacred volume, will often endeavour to praise the Lord for his mercies, and cannot but ask himself the most heart-searching questions. Nor will he restrain prayer before God. If the affections are lively, prayer will ascend to God and bring down blessings. One of the youngest men in the Westminster Assembly was Gillespie. He was often in prayer. He was mighty in the Scriptures. When debate was high and long, his notes were filled with petitions for light from above. When a committee had spent unprofitable hours on the question, What is God? Gillespie was asked to lead in prayer. He began, "O thou, who art a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth;" and thus was ob-

tained the remarkable answer to the fourth question in our Shorter Catechism. There is no substitute for prayer. It is never out of season, never without profit. It prepares us to receive wisdom from above, and then brings it down to us. It opens our eyes, it opens the hand of God, it opens the gates of heaven.

The advantages secured by devout meditation are many and inestimable. Bishop Hall says: "It is not hasty reading, but seriously meditating on holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching on the flowers that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon them, and drawing out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most on divine truth, that will prove the choicest, wisest, strongest Christian." If you would savour the things that be of God, you must dwell upon them in your thoughts. If you commune not with God, your soul will perish. All your affections will be chilled, unless you warm them by heavenly meditations. To do this, you must redeem time from sleep, or from business, or from company, and think upon these things. Then you may say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation." Thus you will grow in grace as well as in knowledge, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your minds and hearts through Christ Jesus. And when life shall reach its solemn close, you shall find but few tethers binding you to earth, and you will easily give up all perishing things, and go to be with God.

Nor need you be afraid of carrying this duty too far. "Disgrace your sins by odious aggravations; invite your soul to God, and Christ, and goodness, by spreading the amiableness of all before it. Chide yourself sharply for the sins you find; stir up yourself earnestly by all the powerful motives that are before you. Comfort your soul, by spreading before it the present and the everlasting joys; support

it by thinking on the grounds of faith, and direct it into the right way of duty, and drive it to resolve and promise obedience for the time to come." God is more glorious, Christ more excellent, the Spirit more loving, life more solemn, duty more pressing, temptation more powerful, sin more deceitful, remorse more terrible, peace of conscience more valuable, the time of your departure more uncertain, hell more dismal, and heaven more ravishing, than in your warmest thoughts you ever conceived them to be.

For directions in this duty, take the following:—1. Settle it in your mind that you are bound to meditate on religious truth. It is commanded by God. Its obligation is enforced by the example of pious men, whose history is given in God's word. "Stand in awe and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." "I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches." The example of our Saviour should mightily sway us in this matter. Baxter says:—"Christ was used to a solitary garden, so that even Judas, when he came to betray him, knew where to find him. John xviii. 2. And though he took his disciples thither with him, yet did he separate himself from them for more secret devotion. Luke xxii. 41. And though his meditation be not directly named, only in prayer, yet it is clearly implied. His *soul is first made sorrowful*, with the bitter meditation on his death and suffering; and then, he *poureth it out in prayer*. Matt. xxvi. 38, 39; Mark xiv. 34, 35." Meditation is clearly a duty.

2. If you would speed well in this duty, avoid too much lawful business. One of the ancients says: *In licitis omnes perimus:* in things lawful we all perish. How can he profitably meditate, who has two duties for every moment of his waking time? A time for everything, and everything in its time, is a rule that always works well, if God, the soul, and eternity, get their full share. Beware of becoming the

slave of any business, though it be even for the advancement of human happiness, or the promotion of the general objects of religion. Corroding cares will waste the energies of any man's piety. 'Tis sad when a poor soul laments: "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

3. But beware of idleness. It is the bane of joy and of piety. Vacancy of thought destroys all life and peace. "Be diligent in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." Never sink down into sloth and inaction. Stir yourself up to take hold on God. Pursue with energy your lawful calling. Paul was a tent-maker, and Daniel a prime-minister.

4. Put the highest value on divine things. Subordinate all to them. Never think it a small matter to secure God's favour, to wear his image, to behold his face in peace, to dwell in his bosom. Seek great things in religion.

5. Try to take cheerful views of divine things. Dwell on your mercies. Look at the bright as well as the dark side. Do not cherish gloomy thoughts. Melancholy is no friend to devotion. It greatly hinders the usefulness of many. "It falls upon a contented life like a drop of ink on white paper, which is not the less a stain because it carries no meaning with it." Let your soul rove through the truths of Scripture as the happy herds do through the green pastures.

6. Beware of all the malignant passions. They are great foes to grace. Envy is devilish. Hatred is murderous. Wrath is cruel. Even peevishness destroys equanimity, and then connected thought is impossible. God's Spirit is a dove, not a bird of prey. He flies from noise and strife. He who ruleth not his own spirit will be ruled by an evil spirit.

7. Keep all your feelings under the control of your judgment. Sir Matthew Hale well says:—"The passions are

unruly cattle, and therefore you must keep them chained up, and under the government of religion, reason, and prudence. If you thus keep them under discipline, they are useful servants; but if you let them loose, and give them head, they will be your masters, and unruly masters, and carry you like wild and unbridled horses into a thousand mischiefs and inconveniences, besides the great disturbance, disorder, and discomposure they will occasion in your own mind." A perturbed mind can pursue no profitable train of thought.

8. Remember that there are no limits to the improvement you may make. You may acquire a thousand times your present strength of character, and you will then be prepared for still higher advances. You are not straitened in God. Be not straitened in your own bowels. Enlarge your heart. Enlarge your desires. Be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with all the fulness of God.

9. Make much of the Lord Jesus Christ. Never slight him. He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. You may easily think too much of some others. You cannot make too much of him. He is before all, in all, through all, over all, above all.

10. Watch against the influence of the things of time, and keep eternity in view. The Lord is at hand. The Judge standeth before the door. Think of things a great while to come. That which shall befall you a thousand years hence, is of vaster moment than what befalls you now. Remember that.

Thus doing, you shall be a growing Christian; your title to sonship with God shall become clearer and clearer; your path shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day: and soon, O how soon, you shall enter into the joy of your Lord!

In the hope that it may aid some minds, there are annexed a few short meditations in an orchard. They were sug-

gested by the last entry made by Henry Martyn in his Journal: "I sat in the orchard, and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God, in solitude my company, my friend, and comforter."

I went into an orchard, where were many trees. One of them shaded many rods of land. It was a goodly sight. Its limbs were long and straight. Its foliage was of the richest green. Every spring it was covered with blossoms. It was in the best soil. Its growth had been rapid. Not a dead limb could I see. I pointed it out to its owner as one of the finest trees I had ever seen. He replied: "I shall cut it down. It never bears any fruit." I saw that he was in earnest, and could not persuade him to let it stand. Around it were many trees. A few that seemed thrifty had a little fruit, but it was small, crabbed, and not worth gathering. One tree had many bushels of fruit, but already it had the bitter rot. It never matured. The owner said: "I shall cut all these down. I have done all I could for them. But they are worthless."

In the midst of these, I saw six or eight little trees. Two of them were not six feet high. But their little limbs were bent to the ground with fruit. "These," said the proprietor, "are younger than the others. Nor do they grow like the rest. Their strength seems to be annually exhausted in fruit-bearing. But they do not kill my grass, nor injure my land. I shall watch them well. I love those little trees. Their fruit is delicious and abundant."

We then went to another place, where I saw many old stumps of trees, and around them well grown trees covered with fruit. The owner had thinned out the useless ones, and had carefully pruned the good ones. These grew the better and bore the more, for they had more light and air. This was the richest part of the orchard. I loved to look upon it.

"Come here," said the owner, "and I will show you a

strange thing. Here is a tree, that was full grown before it bore any fruit. I often thought I would cut it down. But its blossoms were fragrant, and it looked well from the road. At last I thought I would wait no longer. I took my axe and cut it half down. Just then I was called away, and I did not have time to complete my intention until after its blossoms put forth again. I soon discovered young fruit succeeding, and now no tree bears more fruit."

Then he called me to another spot, and I saw a dead tree still standing. It had been drowned by too much water running from a ditch, that came near it. It was a sad sight. But I cared the less when I heard it had been of no value. The owner said: "I would have turned the water away if I cared for it."

So I returned and thought of what I had seen. I thought thus:

1. Blossoms and leaves are not fruit, nor will a wise man take them in the place of fruit. If *man* will not, can I believe that *God* will? Surely the heavenly husbandman knows the difference between appearances and realities, promises and performances, blossoms and fruit. He will cut down those that are mere cumberers of the ground. He has said so, yea, he has already done it in some notable cases. His word is sure. His judgments are terrible. I need go no further than the Jewish church for example. How terrible was her doom.

2. A wise man will not reject or hate a good tree because it is small. Neither will the Lord. He loves the little trees of his planting, which bring forth their fruit in their season. He will give them more advantages. He will cut down the useless trees, that shade them. He will remember them when he comes to remove the cumberers of the ground. It may be mid-winter, and they may all look alike. But he will not forget who had fruit and who had none. You may safely trust him for that.

3. A good husbandman will prune his good trees When in pruning season he passes by a tree, and prunes it not, it is rather a sign that he will soon cut the whole tree down, than that he loves it. Because every good tree needs pruning. Just so does the Lord deal with his people. By sermons, by enemies, by providences he often makes them to bleed. But he knows what he is doing. And although at present he makes them to suffer, yet in the end he knows the result will be good.

4. That tree half cut down reminds me of many, whom I have known, who never bore fruit till God took away husband, or wife, or child, or property, or health. When they were half cut down, they began to bear fruit. But he never repaired the breach, though they often desired it. He knew them too well to ruin them by too much of the sap of prosperity.

5. The tree that was drowned was worthless, else it would have been spared. The waters of affliction shall not be let loose upon the righteous all the time. "He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust." The spirit of good men "shall not fail before him." It is the sorrow of the world, that worketh death. It has no relief from God's grace. "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

6. Then I turned to my Bible, and there I found much about trees and fruit. The righteous shall be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water." "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." "Every branch in me, that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." "No chastisement is for the present joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." So I remembered that the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, were safe.

7. But then I learned also how strong is nature, and how

surely nature will show itself. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." "The tree is known by his fruit." The sign is sure.

8. But how dreadful is the doom of the wicked, who honour not God. "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" "Son of man, what is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch, which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work? Behold, when it was whole it was meet for no work. How much less shall it be meet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned? Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As the vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem." When I had read thus far, I trembled, for I saw that God had made everything for some use, and that as a vine, that bears no fruit, can only be useful in making a fire, so the wicked who honour not God, can only be useful in their own destruction. The truth is clear. The interpretation is certain. O Lord, have mercy on those who never think of thee. Spare the wild olives. Graft them into the good olive. Let them at last bring forth fruit. If sinners will love sin, and die in sin, and sink to hell, let not their blood be found in my skirts. "Gather not my soul with sinners."

So a pious mind may think on any truth of Scripture, on any work of creation or providence, and turn it to good account. A man was for a time beset with much evil-speaking. Enemies were lively. Some friends were cold. He often received anonymous letters. To those who sought an explanation, he gave it, and they were satisfied. But the storm raged on. At one time he was in danger of losing his temper. At another, he seemed despondent. At another, he

thought of a public vindication. But the evil rumors were so many that a judicial process, which would have embraced them all, must have lasted for months. The public temper was all wrong. At last he resolved, in reliance on God, to keep silence and maintain quietness of soul till life should end, or the tempest cease. His meditation ran thus: If these rumors are true, it would not be lawful to deny them. In such case, my mouth ought to be stopped. If they are *false*, my noticing them will not make them more so. I have determined to try to imitate one, of whom it is said, "He never forgot anything except injuries." The early Christians, when reviled, did bless. 1 Cor. iv. 12. So will I. When Jesus was reviled, he reviled not again. 1 Peter ii 23. Patient continuance in well-doing will, if anything will, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 1 Peter ii. 15. It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression. Prov. xix. 11. He who utters, or without good evidence believes a false rumor, is hurt far more than any one else. Psalm xv. 3. I should pity such with all my heart. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience. 2 Cor. i. 12. I have put all that concerns me into the hands of Christ, and he will keep what I have committed to him. 2 Tim. i. 12. It shall ever be my rule to leave off contention before I begin it, and not after I have defiled my conscience with it. Prov. xvii. 14. "It may be, that the Lord will look upon mine affliction, and requite me good for this cursing this day." 2 Sam. xvi. 12. I need forgiveness for ten thousand sins. Shall I not forgive others? I have lived to no purpose, if rumors, not founded in truth, can destroy my good name. I hope some of my detractors will soon have a better spirit. They have not always shown such evil dispositions. Experience proves that nothing is more tormenting than malignant feelings. If I am called to these trials, so were Job, and Moses, and David, and Paul, and Christ. It is enough that I fare no worse than they. This is perhaps the

best opportunity I shall have for a long time of showing the *meekness* and *patience* of Christ. Time spent in prayer will do more good than if spent in fending and proving, in vindications and recriminations. Eternity is just at hand. It will make these little annoyances soon to disappear. I shall not think of them once in a million of ages; or if I do, it will be only to thank God for sustaining me under them, and for bringing me out of them. Therefore, I will possess my soul in patience and maintain silence. Nothing shall change my purpose.

His friends could not change his mind and left him—some with regret, but all with respect. Time rolled on. The tide of feeling rose to its height, and soon began to subside. His quietness itself had shown the falsity of much that had been said. Unexpected evidence arose in his behalf. His busiest enemies relaxed their efforts, and by degrees changed to be his defenders. The highest character ever given of him was by one who had circulated most of the slanders, and he had the satisfaction of seeing how safe is character in the hands of God. His meditation was wise. Its end was peace. His very purpose gave relief to his mind.

No. 170.

CAMPBELLISM.

THE ORIGIN OF CAMPBELLISM — ITS PRETENSIONS, AND CAUSES OF ITS EARLY SUCCESS.

In the year of our Lord 1823, Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, Virginia, announced himself to the world as a Reformer. He may have appeared in this character earlier than the time we mention; but in that year he commenced the publication of *The Christian Baptist*, in which he developed the principles and doctrines of his new Reformation. It was no ordinary work which he and his friends proposed to themselves; it was a *radical reformation* of the church throughout the world. He could not admit the claims of any of the existing churches to be true churches of Christ. In the preface to the first edition of the Christian Baptist, he said, "Besides, to convert the heathen to the popular Christianity of these times would be an object of no great consequence, as the popular Christians themselves, for the most part, require to be converted to the Christianity of the New Testament." And in vol. i. p. 23, we find the following declaration, "The worshipping establishments now in operation throughout Christendom, increased and cemented by their respective voluminous confessions of faith, and their ecclesiastical constitutions, are not churches of Jesus Christ, but the legitimate daughters of that mother of harlots, the Church of Rome." In the Millennial Harbinger, vol. iii. p. 362, we find the following question and answer: Q. "And what of the apostasy? — do you place all the sects in the apostasy? A. Yes; all religious sects who have any human

bond of union, all who rally under any articles of confederation other than the apostles' doctrine, and who refuse to yield all homage to the ancient order of things."

This was a bold position. Christ and his apostles effected a radical reformation in the church; but it was when *tradition* had been substituted for the Bible. Luther, Calvin, and their co-labourers effected a glorious reformation; but it was when both clergy and people had long been ignorant of the Bible, and oral tradition, expounded by pretended infallibility, was their rule of faith. In both these reformations the morals of the people were as corrupt as their faith; and the former was the indubitable evidence of the latter. But Mr. Campbell undertook a radical reformation amongst those who took the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice; who were in the constant habit of reading and studying the sacred volume; who were zealously engaged in circulating it without note or comment amongst the people; and whose morals, to say the least, were quite as good as his own! Who ever before heard of a radical defection from the truth, without a corresponding deterioration of morals? or of a true reformation in faith, without a corresponding improvement in morals? If Mr. Campbell's reformation is genuine, where are its fruits? Does his sect exhibit a purer morality, or a more expansive and active benevolence than "the sects" he sought to reform? "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The success of this movement was, for a number of years, remarkably rapid. Crowds flocked to the standard of the new reformation; and a numerous sect, filled with admiration for their leader, was speedily formed. It may be well to mention some of the principal causes of this success.

1. Mr. Campbell's zealous advocacy of *immersion* as the only valid baptism, and his opposition to infant baptism, gave him great fame amongst the Baptists. He is a man of popular talents; and, having been educated amongst Presbyterians, had acquired much more learning than Baptist ministers gene-

rally possessed. Being regarded as a Baptist, and editing *The Christian Baptist*, he found little difficulty in diffusing his opinions extensively amongst the Baptist churches, especially in the West. The consequence was, that very large numbers united in forming his new sect.

2. The apparent zeal of Mr. Campbell for the union of all Christians, misled many well-meaning people. He rejected *creeds* as the prolific cause of the unhappy divisions of the church, and with some plausibility insisted, that if all would unite on the Bible alone, and agree to use Bible words in speaking of Bible truths, all divisions would be healed, and unity and harmony restored to the church of Christ. "The principle," says he, "which was inscribed upon our banners when we withdrew from the ranks of the sects, was, Faith in Jesus as the true Messiah, and obedience to him as our Saviour and King, the only test of Christian character, and the only bond of Christian union, communion, and co-operation, irrespective of all creeds, opinions, commandments, and traditions of men."—*Pref. to Chris. Sys.* p. 8. To many minds this platform seemed just the thing needed. The end sought was confessedly most desirable; and the means proposed appeared simple and obvious.

3. Many were drawn into this movement by the extremely simple and easy way of becoming a Christian, proposed by Mr. Campbell. All men feel, more or less sensibly, the need of religion; and if they could be suited, few would hesitate to become religious. Mr. Campbell laughed at "experimental religion," rejected the distinction between mere intellectual belief and saving faith, and required, in order to baptism, the belief of *one single proposition* on the best evidence. Said he, "But the grandeur, sublimity and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this, that the belief of one fact, and that upon the best evidence in the world, is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes, to

salvation. The belief of this one fact, and submission to one institution expressive of it, is all that is required of heaven to admission into the church. * * * The one fact is expressed in a single proposition — *that Jesus, the Nazarene, is the Messiah.* The evidence upon which it is to be believed, is the testimony of twelve men, confirmed by prophecy, miracles, and spiritual gifts. The one institution is baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Every such person is a disciple in the fullest sense of the word, the moment he has believed this one fact, upon the above evidence, and has submitted to the above-mentioned institution."—*Chris. Sys.* pp. 126, 127. How plain the way, and how easy to become a Christian! Multitudes who never imagined that they were near the kingdom, certainly believed the one fact; and why should they not be immersed, and thus secure eternal life?

4. The popularity of this reformation was greatly increased amongst a large class of men by the zeal with which Mr. Campbell assailed the clergy, and denounced all the benevolent enterprises of the age. The clergy of all denominations he represented as corrupt men, influenced wholly by ambition and the love of money. "Every member," said he, "of this kingdom of priests is aiming for one and the same object; and though in other provinces [than the Methodists] the ranks may be fewer, and the honours less, the desires, and aims, and pursuits of the priesthood are specifically the same." Again, "Indeed money is of vital consequence in the kingdom of the clergy. * * * Money is the bond of union, the associating principle in all popular establishments. * * * Money, I think, may be considered not merely as the bond of union in popular establishments, but it is really the rock on which the popular churches are built."—*Chris. Bap.* vol. i. pp. 19, 42, 43. Sabbath-schools, Bible Societies, Missionary Boards were all set down as part and parcel of the plans of the clergy to fill their pockets with the people's money. The

love of money is very strong in the human heart; and appeals to it never fail of producing effect. Covetous men learned with delight from Mr. Campbell, that they were under no obligations to support those who devoted themselves to the preaching of the gospel, as Paul had led them to suppose, (1 Cor. ix. 14), or to give to the Bible and Missionary enterprises. Nay, it was even sinful to do so. It became, therefore, a part of their religion to keep their money in their pockets. Mr. Campbell had discovered not only a very *easy*, but a *very cheap* religion. Why should he not have the thanks of money-loving men? Why should they not be willing to pay him a trifle annually for the Christian Baptist or the Millennial Harbinger, when he so greatly relieved their consciences? Why should they not embrace this cheap religion? The effects of such appeals were soon manifest. One of his admirers wrote him, "Your paper has well nigh stopped missionary operations in this State."—*Chris. Bap.* p. 144. Another correspondent, however, writes just what we would expect, "As I informed you when here, I repeat again, your opposition to a preached gospel, to the preachers and Bible Societies, secures to you the concurrence of the covetous, the ignorant, the prayerless and Christless Christians. Should they have had any religion, they cease to enjoy it as soon as they embrace your views; at the same time you wound the hearts of the zealous and devout Christians."—*Ibid.* vol. i. p. 70. Singular effects these to be produced by the writings of a great *reformer!*

5. This reformation gained popularity, too, because it made every immersed person, however ignorant, *a preacher*, and every little church wholly independent of all others. "A Christian," says Mr. Campbell, "is by profession a preacher of truth and righteousness, both by precept and example. *He may of right preach, baptize, and dispense the supper, as well as pray for all men, when circumstances demand it.*"—*Chris. Sys.* p. 85. Again, "I am taught

from the record itself to describe a church of Christ in the following words:—It is a society of disciples professing to believe the one grand fact, voluntarily submitting to his authority and guidance, having all of them in their baptism expressed their faith in him and allegiance to him, and statedly meeting together in one place, to walk in all his commandments and ordinances. This society, with its bishop or bishops, and deacon or deacons, as the case may require, is perfectly independent of any tribunal on earth called ecclesiastical. It knows nothing of superior or inferior church judicatories, and acknowledges no laws, no canons, nor government, other than that of the Monarch of the universe and his laws. This church, having now committed to it the oracles of God, is adequate to all the purposes of illumination and reformation which entered into the design of its founder. * * * But to be more explicit in expressing my views of the means which the church is to use for the salvation of the world, I would remark, that having the record, or testimony of God in it, and every member professing it, it becomes the duty and high privilege of every member of it to be a preacher of the gospel, in the only sense in which any person can now be called a preacher."—*Chris. Bap.* p. 70. What an attraction is here presented to that numerous class of persons who are "wise in their own conceit!" They have but to profess to believe *one fact*, and to be immersed; and without previous study, literary or theological, whether able to read intelligibly or not, they at once become teachers of religion—a work in view of which the wisest and best men have trembled! And those who possess some smartness and fluency, may hope to be chosen by the little independent church to the high and important office of *bishop!* Is it wonderful that great numbers of ambitious persons, who could become distinguished in no other church, should hasten to this? Paul's directions to Timothy and Titus concerning the character and qualifications of a bishop, seem not to have stood in Mr. Campbell's

way for a moment. Every little church of a dozen members or fewer, is to judge whether those they may choose, are "blameless," "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," "apt to teach." Nay, every "novice," though "lifted up with pride," is "a preacher of the gospel in the only sense in which any person can now be called a preacher!"

Such were the leading features of this reformation of the nineteenth century. Did it require the convincing power of truth to insure it success, at least for a number of years? Who that knows anything of human nature, would not have predicted for this sect a rapid increase, under the leadership of a man of popular talents, and of great pretensions to learning?

THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF CAMPBELLISM AFFORD ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE WORST HERESIES.

Let us now approach this new church a little more closely, and examine the principles which lie at its foundation. We propose to say nothing concerning the mode and subjects of baptism, points on which the Campbellite body and the Baptists agree. We confine our remarks to what is fundamental to the faith and to the organization of the Christian Church.

The Campbellite sect was organized, if it can be said to have an organization, upon the two following principles: 1. The rejection of creeds, and union upon the Bible alone. 2. Asking but one question of candidates for baptism, whether they believed Jesus Christ to be the Messiah.

Regarding creeds, Mr. Campbell says, "Our opposition to creeds arose from a conviction, that whether the opinions in them were true or false, they were hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity, and joy of Christians; and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ."—*Chris. Sys.* p. 90.

In the Lexington Debate he contended, that "human creeds, as bonds of union and communion, are necessarily heretical and schismatical." The ecclesiastical platform thus adopted is exceedingly broad, sufficiently so to admit persons holding the grossest errors. Let us look at some of the unhappy results:

The body possesses no unity of faith, but errors of every shade find a home in it. It is impossible to know anything definitely concerning the faith of an individual from his professing to take the Bible alone as his rule of faith and practice, and from his professing to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This uncertainty does not arise from any obscurity in the Bible, or from any imperfection in its teaching, but from the many perversions of its language by errorists. The Swedenborgian professes to receive the Bible, but adopts principles of interpretation which utterly pervert its meaning. The Unitarian professes to believe the Bible, and readily declares his belief, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, but he so interprets the language of the Bible as to make him a super-angelic creature or a mere man, and his atonement nothing more than the death of a martyr. The Universalist professedly receives the Bible, but he not only rejects its plain teaching in regard to the character and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but maintains that the conduct of men in this life has no effect whatever upon their future prospects. Indeed all errorists, bearing the Christian name, profess to believe the Bible, and that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. All, therefore, from the purest orthodoxy to the lowest grade of error, are invited into this no-creed church. They are all to use the same language, though they attach to it meanings infinitely variant. Can anything present a more striking idea of Babel than such a church? Mr. Campbell seems to have found a triumphant answer to the question of the prophet, "How can two walk together except they be

agreed?" (Amos iii. 3), and to the question of Paul, "What communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. vi. 14.)

We would not misrepresent Mr. Campbell or his church. Let facts and his own declarations constitute the evidence by which our judgment shall be formed. In the beginning of the present century, there arose a sect called New-Lights, headed by Barton W. Stone. They denied the Divinity of Christ and his vicarious atonement, and embraced the Arian heresy. In the article published in the Christian Baptist, (vol. v. p. 379), Mr. Stone contended earnestly, "that the Word (*di' hou*) *by whom* all things were made, was not the only true God, but a person that existed with the only true God before creation began; not from eternity, else he must be the only true God, but long before the reign of Augustus Cæsar." The Word, the Son of God, he insists, did not exist from eternity. There was consequently a period when he did not exist, and a period when he was brought into existence; and since he could not create himself, he was a creature of God, as truly as are angels or men. Holding such views of Christ, Mr. Stone and his followers, of course, rejected the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Mr. Stone held, that the death of Christ was simply a manifestation of God's love to men for the purpose of leading them to repentance.* In a written controversy between Messrs. Campbell and Stone on the doctrine of atonement, Mr. Campbell said, "*Brother Stone*, we are discussing the greatest question in the world—*For what did the Messiah die?*"—*Ibid.* p. 253. These two reformers differed infinitely on two of the most important doctrines of Christianity—the Divinity and the Atonement of Christ—doctrines which constitute the very foundation of the Christian's hope, and on which the church of Christ is built. They necessarily differed as widely concerning the personality, the Divinity and the work of the Holy Spirit. Indeed the gospel preached by Mr. Campbell was fundamentally different from

* Millennial Harbinger, New Series, vol. v. pp. 63, 64.

the gospel preached by Mr. Stone; and yet Mr. Stone and his followers, large numbers of them, were admitted into Mr. Campbell's church, without professing any change of faith! When pressed with this fact in the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell said, "I cheerfully say, I do not approve of all that Barton W. Stone has written and said, yet I believe our society has been, and is pursuing a most salutary and redeeming policy."—p. 865. A redeemiug policy by receiving as Christian brethren and Christian ministers those who robbed Christ of his glory, and his cross of its power to save sinners! To the day of his death, Mr. Stone, so far as we have learned, never professed any change in his faith.

With equal consistency, A. Raines, a preacher of Universalism, was cordially received into Mr. Campbell's church, still avowing Universalist sentiments. Universalists are generally Socinians, regarding Jesus Christ as a mere man, and wholly rejecting the doctrine of a vicarious atonement. They indeed reject every distinguishing doctrine of the gospel, holding, that the conduct of men in this life can have no effect upon their future prospects; that every individual suffers all that his sins deserve, and that all, whether receiving or rejecting Christ, will be eternally happy. Universalism is nothing more nor less than a degrading infidelity wearing the Christian name.

But this preacher of Universalism desired to become a member of the reformation church. He professed to take the Bible as his rule of faith, and to believe *the one fact*, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah; and how could he be rejected? Most inconsistently, Mr. Campbell and his friends catechized him about his Universalist notions. Mr. Campbell says, "Whether he held these views as matters of faith, or as pure matters of opinion, was then propounded to him. He avowed them to be, in his judgment, matters of opinion, and not matters of faith; and, in reply to another question, averred that he would not teach them, believing them to be matters

of opinion, and not the gospel of Jesus Christ."—*Millen. Harb.* vol. i. p. 147. Here is a most singular proceeding. Mr. Campbell professes to believe, that the Bible teaches the doctrine of the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked. Mr. Raines *had* believed, as matter of faith, that it teaches the eternal salvation of all men. He now agreed to hold this view as an *opinion*. That is, his *opinion* was, that Mr. Campbell's *faith* on this subject was not true! He agreed not to preach his *opinion;* but how was he to preach the opposite doctrine, as every true minister of Christ must? Could he preach, as a matter of *faith*, that those dying in sin will be eternally punished, whilst holding as a matter of *opinion*, that they will be saved? But this *opinion* could not stand by itself. A reasonable man would have some grounds for so important an opinion. He must have believed, with other Universalists, that every man makes satisfaction to Divine justice for his own sins, or that men will be pardoned without repentance or faith. He must have believed, with other Universalists, that those dying in sin will be made holy after death. These beliefs, whether held as *opinions* or as *faith*, directly contradict the leading doctrines of the gospel. How, then, could Mr. Raines hold and preach those doctrines whilst holding such opinions? Shall we say, his *opinion* was, that his *faith* was false. And how could he consider his Universalist opinions as no part of the gospel, when he must have gotten them in the gospel, if anywhere?

These remarks are equally applicable to Unitarians. The doctrine of the gospel is, that Christ is truly God, and that he atoned for the sins of his people on the cross. Suppose, then, Mr. Stone and his followers had agreed to hold their views as matters of *opinion;* how could they hold and preach that Christ is God, when their *opinion* was, that he is not? or that sinners are justified by faith in him as their great High Priest, when they *in opinion* rejected his sacrifice?

But Mr. Campbell deliberately prepared the way for the reception of Unitarians and Universalists. Said he, if the words used by the Unitarian, are "Bible words, we cannot object to them; if they are not, we will not hear them, or, what is the same thing, will not discuss them at all. If he will ascribe to Jesus all Bible attributes, names, works, and worship, we will not fight with him about scholastic words. But if he will not ascribe to him everything that the first Christians ascribed, and worship and adore him as the first Christians did, we will reject him; not because of his private opinions, but because he refuses to honour Jesus as the first converts did, and withholds from him the titles and honours which God and his apostles have bestowed upon him."—*Chris. Restored*, pp. 122, 123. Now, if this means anything, it means — that so long as Unitarians do not object to using the language of the Bible in reference to Christ — a thing which they are not likely to do — Mr. Campbell and his church will make no difficulty about the interpretation they put upon that language. But is not language the vehicle of ideas? and is even the language of the Bible of any worth, except as it conveys to the mind the truths the Holy Spirit designed to teach? Men are sanctified through "*the truth*," not through words misunderstood. It is *the truth* that makes us free, not words so interpreted as to teach error. True piety is obedience to *the truth*, not to words misinterpreted. How absurd, then, to insist that men shall use *the words* of the Bible, and yet allow them, at least as matter of *opinion*, to assign to them a false meaning. Of what use is it for one to call Jesus Christ GOD, when he regards him as a *creature?* Of what avail is it, that men profess to believe that Christ was "once offered to bear the sins of many," when by *bearing sin* they understand, with Barton W. Stone, *bearing it away?* What is gained by Universalists uttering the words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," when they understand everlasting punishment to mean that which

is endured *in this life*, and hold to the salvation of all the wicked? It is like caring for the husks, and throwing away the grain. Yet Mr. Campbell says, let the Universalist have "his private opinion," though that opinion is in direct contradiction of the gospel, and is of demoralizing tendency.

This new reformation has a very broad mantle of charity for errorists. It has no difficulty in receiving those who deny the immateriality and immortality of the soul. A Dr. Thomas, formerly of Virginia, published *The Gospel Advocate*, in which he contended, that man is composed of body, blood, and *breath;* that the word *soul*, in the Scriptures, means *breath;* that the righteous sleep in their graves till the resurrection; that pagans, infants, and idiots are annihilated. Mr. Campbell's displeasure was incurred by this heretical teacher, and he most inconsistently entered into a public debate with him. He failed to convince the Doctor, who, however, still professed his belief of *the one fact*, and held to *immersion*. What was to be done? He could not exclude him from the body without palpable violation of his fundamental principles. Certain brethren who sought to be peacemakers, considering that the views of Dr. Thomas had given offence, were likely to cause division, and were of no practical benefit, "recommended to brother Thomas to discontinue the discussion of the same, unless in his defence, when misrepresented." — *Lexington Debate*, p. 856. To this Dr. Thomas agreed, and "all difficulties were adjusted, and perfect harmony and co-operation mutually agreed upon between them," [Thomas and Campbell]. Mr. Campbell charged Thomas with violating this agreement; but he continued a member and a preacher in that church, having the same rights as Mr. Campbell himself!

Thus we see, that so exceedingly comprehensive are the fundamental principles of this organization, that the grossest errorists might not only be members in good standing, but *public teachers of religion!* Such were Stone, Raines,

Thomas, and others. How could it be otherwise? Every one who professed to believe that Christ is the Messiah, had the right to be immersed and become a member of the church; and every such member was "by profession a preacher of truth and righteousness, both by precept and example," and might "of right preach, baptize, and dispense the supper, as well as pray for all men, when circumstances demand it." And every church, small or large, intelligent or ignorant, had the right to choose from among its members bishops, elders, and deacons. No standard of intellectual attainment was agreed on, nor any doctrines which those selected should profess to believe, nor any preparatory theological study. If churches selected the most ignorant or the most erroneous preachers, no one had the right to interfere or object. If those most unqualified, and most conceited undertook to preach the gospel and to baptize, they were but exercising the rights of every disciple!

SOME OF THE ACKNOWLEDGED EVILS OF THE SYSTEM.

What would any reasonable man anticipate in a church founded on such principles, but "confusion worse confounded?" The facts correspond with such anticipations. We call not an enemy to testify concerning the state of this reformation within a few years of its birth. We appeal to the testimony of Mr. Campbell himself. There is no danger that he will give the picture one shade too dark. His partiality and his regard for his own honour will induce him to take the most favourable view. He writes in the following strain:

"How few public preachers and teachers at this day are there, that need not be ashamed of their aptitude to discriminate and apply the holy oracles. Ought not many to blush, who presume to speak by a divine call, specially to them addressed, for their ignorance of all the laws of language, the force of words, the logical point in an argument,

the meaning of the sacred style, and their inaptitude to expound and apply the word of truth! How many ought to blush for their irreverent manner of speaking in the Divine presence, their rapid and most irreligious way of pronouncing the Divine names and attributes, their profanation of the privilege of prayer, in the most undevout style of addressing God, and of speaking to him merely for the sake of speaking to men, correcting what they deem popular errors, and eulogizing kindred spirits, while addressing the awful throne of God! The times are sadly out of joint in all these respects. Public prayers are sometimes mere sermons preached to God, &c. For all this insolence to heaven, and for all these lamentable defects, we have neither jurisdiction nor tribunal. We certainly have not, if any individual may send himself and authorize his own acts; or if a small, weak, irresponsible community may send out whom it pleases into the world. The cause of reformation would ere now have overrun the whole community, but for two causes. One is, the great masses of neglected new converts who are not taught the Christian religion in scriptural churches, and who consequently lose confidence in themselves, return to the world, or remain dry and barren branches on the mystic vine. The other is, a class of unsent, unaccomplished, uneducated advocates who plead it; amongst whom, too, have been found a number of persons of immoral character, who have assumed the profession as a cloak of covetousness — as means of imposing themselves on the unsuspecting and benevolent. * * * We have bled at every pore through the lacerations of many such. And had not our cause possessed more than mortal strength, had it not been of celestial origion and divine power, it had long since been prostrate through traitors, pretenders, incompetent disciplinarians, and impotent administrators."

Again, "But we have not yet laid open the great defects of our evangelical ministry. There are the belligerent theorists, whose special care it is, in every sermon, or on all

public occasions, to disinter the remains of some fallen or decayed system, exhibit its bones and putrid remains, and then to bury it again with all the honours of an ecclesiastic war; and, in contrast with it, to unfold the charms of a wiser and better theory. Alas! what pranks are played on earth, in the presence of mourning angels, by those whose undertaking it is to persuade sinners to turn to God and live for ever.

"Another portion of our more gifted and ingenious cohorts have addicted themselves to the enviable task of public censors of the senior theologians. Boys in their *teens*, or youths who, for years to come, would not have been permitted to lay a shoulder of mutton on God's ancient altar, are now gravely and learnedly exposing the errors of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, the Synods of Dort, Westminster, and Trent, *cum multis aliis*, with as much self-approbation and secret relish as the most exquisite sensualist devours a favourite dish when his appetite is stimulated with the pickles of Mæcenas and a fast of full twelve hours. These are the wild beasts of our Ephesus, with whom it is more difficult to conflict than with those with whom Paul fought at the capital of Asia. Yet these are workmen who are never ashamed, but always glory in their success in what they call preaching the gospel of peace. Of these profanations of the evangelical office, and of these flagrant aberrations from good sense, good taste, and approved models, the more intelligent and pious communities are always complaining; but without perceiving that they have the power of preventing the evil."

Once more — after a life-like picture of these preachers of reformation, Mr. Campbell says, "The cause of reformation has suffered more from this portion of its pretended friends than from all its enemies put together. This state of things is indeed generally attendant on the incipiency of all public and social institutions. But we have had a very large portion of this unhappy and mischievous influence to contend

with. Every sort of doctrine has been proclaimed by almost all sorts of preachers, under the broad banners and with the supposed sanction of the begun reformation."

What a picture of the reformation of the nineteenth century! Overrun with ignorant, self-conceited, profane, disputatious preachers, proclaiming every sort of doctrine, and of course every species of ruinous error! This young church, the light of the world, bleeding at every pore through the lacerations of its preachers! If such is the character of the preachers, what must be the character and condition of the churches by which they are sent, or which are formed through their preaching!

But, worst of all, Mr. Campbell confesses that his church has "neither jurisdiction nor tribunal" by which these dreadful evils can be prevented. Well, why has it not? Has the Saviour left his church thus exposed to be overrun by wicked men and errorists? or did Mr. Campbell and his co-labourers establish their church on false principles? Undoubtedly the latter is true. The overwhelming evils and corruptions of which Mr. Campbell so bitterly complains, are manifestly the legitimate and necessary consequences of the principles so long and so earnestly advocated by himself. He would ask candidates for baptism but one question, a question which the grossest errorists would readily answer; and when baptized, each individual had the right to preach, baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper; and each church had the right to choose and ordain its own preachers. What was there, then, to prevent all sorts of men from preaching all sorts of doctrine? Whilst Mr. Campbell thus deplored the dreadful state of his church, and severely censured others, he might well have confessed, with deep penitence, the grievous errors into which he had fallen, and into which he had led multitudes of his fellow-men, and the irreparable injury he had done to the church of Christ.

Mr. Campbell has sought in vain to rectify some of his

errors. After having contended successfully, so far as his own church was concerned, against all ecclesiastical councils, and in favour of the entire independence of each church, he became alarmed at the confusion and heresies which were disgracing it, and wrote in favour of *organization*. He prepared the outline of a *constitution* embracing *six articles*, and said, "The above outline is offered to the examination of the brethren, as embracing much, if not everything that, in our judgment, is wanting to complete and perfect organization." —*Lexington Debate*, pp. 827, 828. But the "mixed multitude" he had collected, and the turbulent preachers by whom the church was afflicted, would not accept Mr. Campbell's constitution; and so the body remains to this day an unorganized, confused multitude. They saw that his efforts at organization were in flat contradiction of the leading principles of his reformation.

Look at Mr. Campbell's church, as described by himself, and say whether it can be called "the pillar and ground of the truth." In favour of what doctrine does it bear its testimony? Does it not uphold Unitarianism, and Universalism, and Materialism quite as effectively as the opposite truths? Nay, by admitting those who hold such errors into fellowship, has it not endorsed the errors as, at least, harmless? and has it not afforded great facilities for the propagation of them? The very best that can be said for this church is, that its faith cannot be known; or rather that, as a body, it has no faith. How can a church be said to have any faith, when every kind of doctrine is preached by all sorts of men under its broad banner? Does not such a church by its very position before the world, declare truth and error with respect to the doctrines of the cross to be equally good? Would you call such a church "the light of the world?" God's revealed truth is light; but this church, as a body, cannot be said to hold any particular doctrine or doctrines. If you say its faith is Trinitarian, you misrepresent many of its members

and preachers. If you call it Unitarian, you misrepresent others. Indeed, as the body, (if a multitude of independent churches can be called a body), has not told the world what doctrines it understands the Bible to teach; as it has in its communion men who preach "every sort of doctrine," we have no difficulty in deciding, that it cannot be "the light of the world." It strikingly resembles old Ovid's description of the original Chaos — *rudis indigestaque moles — congestaque eodem non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum.* "A rude and confused pile — the discordant seeds of things badly united, thrown together."

Can there be efficiency for good in such a body? If there be truth in the saying, *united we stand, divided we fall,* there cannot. What one would build up, another pulls down. The truth is the sword of the Spirit; but this church, as such, holds not the truth, wields not the sword. It is made up of individuals that hold every shade of belief. What can such a body do to evangelize the world?

Would you enter such a church in the hope of receiving edification, of growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Would you fraternize with "every sort of doctrine," and "almost all sorts of men," acknowledging them as the faithful servants of Christ? Would you throw your Christian influence with such a body? Would you place your children under such teachers? You would not have them eat at a table where every sort of food would be given them to eat.

We are not surprised to find in churches gathered on such a platform a great falling away. Now and then one of Mr. Campbell's preachers speaks out on this subject, giving us a glimpse of the real state of things. Some years since, one of them wrote to Mr. Campbell in the following strain:

"I could instance churches, within a few years, which have had scores of converts added to them that are now scarcely alive, that have very few active members, other than

those who were such previous to excitements which resulted in such large accessions to their numbers." In reply Mr. Campbell said, "I am aware that there is much ground for complaint on account of the errors alluded to by brother Gates. He is not the only complainant on such accounts." —*Millen. Harb.* vol. vi. pp. 325, 327. Still more recently another correspondent of a Campbellite paper, says —

"I am rejoiced that you are attentively considering the state of our cause, and are striking at the root of all our disasters, a want of piety. That our denomination, in some parts of our country, is in chaos, is a fact too obvious for concealment, and we fear if some vigorous measures are not adopted, some whole regions of our churches will become annihilated. We have travelled over hundreds of miles where there was not to be found an evangelist, and no teachers except those miserable drivellers who wield the hammer and the lapstone all the week, and '*spound*' on Sunday."

Another says, "The stakes are fixed, and there will be no reform worth a groat without a division, or remodelling the form of things; and this cannot now be done. The church has gone 'whoring after strange gods.'"

After all, however, this church has a creed to which it adheres with as great tenacity as if it were written. It is a creed, too, which excludes from its communion multitudes of the wisest and most faithful of the followers of Christ.. This creed has at least two leading articles. The first is, that *immersion* is the only Christian baptism; and the second is, that infants are not scriptural subjects of baptism. On these points there seems to be entire unity in Mr. Campbell's church; but there is glaring inconsistency. They set out on the principle of being guided only by the Bible, and having no creed. And yet they decide, that no one can be admitted into that church, unless he agree with them about *the mode* and subjects of baptism. Men may hold any opinions they choose, concerning the character and the work of Christ and

of the Holy Spirit; but as to the mode of applying the water in baptism, they will tolerate no difference; nor as to the *subjects* of baptism. This is, indeed, "tithing mint, anise and cummin," and disregarding "the weightier matters of the law." How great the folly of attaching so great importance to an outward ordinance, and so little to the fundamental doctrines of the cross, and how glaring the inconsistency! What right have Mr. Campbell and his coadjutors to determine, after repudiating creeds, what men desiring membership in the church shall believe respecting baptism? Why may they not just as well determine what they must believe on other points? And why not have a *written* creed, as well as an *unwritten* one, which is made just as binding as if written and adopted?

THE SYSTEM EXAMINED AND ITS ERRORS EXPOSED.

Mr. Campbell, we have said, is the father of this reformation church. He has published more concerning its principles than any other. His writings have been more generally read, and been received with greater favour. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that his views prevail more extensively than those of any other man. It is worth while, therefore, to examine the prominent points in his creed. They are the following:

Baptismal justification. — The new birth, the necessity of which our Saviour urged upon Nicodemus, is not, according to Mr. Campbell, *a change of heart*, but *a change of state*. It is not passing from spiritual death to spiritual life, but from condemnation to justification. *Immersion*, which Mr. Campbell regards as the new birth, introduces persons into "the kingdom of heaven," securing to them remission of sins and all the blessings of the kingdom. "So in religion," says Mr. Campbell, "a man may change his views of Jesus, and his heart may also be changed toward him; but unless

a change of state ensues, he is still unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost to all Christian life and enjoyment. * * * Some *act*, then, constitutional, by stipulation proposed, sensible and manifest, must be performed by one or both the parties, before such a change can be accomplished. * * * Whatever the act of faith may be, it necessarily becomes the line of discrimination between the two states before described. On this side, and on that, mankind are in quite different states. On the one side they are pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; on the other they are in a state of condemnation. This act is sometimes called immersion, regeneration, conversion," &c. Again, "Immersion for the forgiveness of sins, was *the command* addressed to these believers, to these penitents in answer to the most earnest question; and by one of the most sincere, candid, and honest speakers ever heard. This act of faith was presented as that act by which a change in their state could be effected; or, in other words, by which alone they could be pardoned."—*Chris. Sys.* pp. 200, 201, 203. The obvious meaning of all this is, that whatever may be the state of the minds of men, however truly penitent, and however sincere their faith in Christ, and their disposition to obey him; they are unpardoned and liable to perish until they have the *act of immersion* performed for them! In the Christian Baptist Mr. Campbell makes, concerning the converts on the day of Pentecost, the following assertion: "I am bold, therefore, to affirm, that every one of these who, in the belief of what the apostle spoke, was immersed, did, on the very instant in which he was put under water, receive the forgiveness of his sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. If so, then, who will not concur with me in saying, that Christian immersion is the gospel in water?"—pp. 416, 417. Against this doctrine we enter our solemn protest, for the following reasons:

1. To assert that any external ordinance is essential to re-

mission of sins and to salvation, is to contradict the whole spirit and teaching of the Bible. In every part of it right dispositions and affections are placed above ordinances, and the favour of God is promised to the former, and not to the latter. The old dispensation was remarkable for the number of ordinances and for the prominence given to them. Circumcision, as the seal of the covenant, was perhaps the most important of them all; and yet during the journey in the wilderness, for forty years, it was omitted. And Paul teaches plainly, that the circumcision of the heart, inward purification, is of greater value than the circumcision of the flesh.* David teaches the same doctrine with regard to sacrifices; and our Saviour, in regard to tithing mint, anise and cummin.† The great end at which our Heavenly Father aims, is to have men holy in heart and life. Ordinances are part of the means through which ordinarily this end is gained. But to say, that if the end be gained by only *part* of the means, the soul, loving and trusting Christ, is still condemned, is to magnify the means above the end, to make an outward observance more valuable than holiness.

2. The doctrine we are opposing makes the salvation of men dependent upon acts they cannot, if they would, perform for themselves. It is not pretended, that individuals can administer baptism to themselves; and it cannot be denied, that multitudes are placed in circumstances in which they cannot secure an administrator. A man well instructed in the principles of Christianity, may sicken and die amongst pagans. He may become a penitent believer; but he cannot obtain Christian baptism. A thousand other cases may be supposed, such as do constantly occur, in which the heart is right; but *immersion* cannot be had. Besides, there are great multitudes whose conduct demonstrates the sincerity of their faith in Christ and of their love to him, who have

* Rom. ii. 25–29. † Psa. li. 16, 17; and Matt. xxiii. 23.

been baptized in infancy, or, at least, by sprinkling; and who are fully persuaded that they have obeyed the command to be baptized. All such, according to Mr. Campbell's doctrine, are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise." The one class must perish, though penitent believers, simply because it was impossible for them to receive an outward ordinance; and the other, though truly pious, because of an intellectual mistake. Does Mr. Campbell shrink from these results of his doctrine? Hear him, "There are three births, three kingdoms, and three salvations. One from the womb of our first mother, one from the water, and one from the grave. We enter a new world on, and not before, each birth. The present animal life, at the first birth; the spiritual, or the life of God in our souls, at the second birth; and the life eternal in the presence of God, at the third birth. And he who dreams of entering the second kingdom, or coming under the dominion of Jesus, without the second birth, may, to complete his error, dream of entering the kingdom of glory without a resurrection from the dead. * * * Infants, idiots, deaf and dumb persons, innocent pagans wherever they can be found, with all the pious Pædo-Baptists, we commend to the mercy of God. * * * But one thing we do know, that none can *rationally*, and with *certainty* enjoy the peace of God, and the hope of heaven, but they who intelligently, and in full faith are born of water, or immersed for the remission of their sins."—*Chris. Sys.* pp. 243, 244. And as in the Lexington Debate he fully endorsed what he had published on this subject in the Christian System, we must understand him as still occupying this ground. Yet at times, under the promptings of better feelings, he has flatly contradicted this absurd doctrine. In the Millennial Harbinger, vol. iii. p. 304, he says, "*I do admit that a person who believes the gospel, and cannot be immersed, may obtain remission.*" Now, suppose I believe the gospel to-day, but cannot be im-

mersed till to-morrow or next week, am I in a state of condemnation till to-morrow or next week?

But Mr. Campbell goes further in his admissions. In reply to one of his followers who found fault with him for admitting that there are some Christians among "the sects," he said, "But who is a Christian? I answer, every one that believes in his heart, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will. * * * I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven. * * * Should I find a Pædo-Baptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I should be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians. * * * With me mistakes of the understanding, and errors of the affections, are not to be confounded. They are as distant as the poles. An angel may mistake the meaning of a commandment, but he will obey it in the sense in which he understands it. John Bunyan and John Newton were very different persons, and had very different views of baptism, and of some other things; yet they were both disposed to obey, and to the extent of their knowledge did they obey the Lord in everything."—*New Series*, vol. i. pp. 411, 412, 413. Here we have the acknowledgment, that remission of sins and Christian hopes depend, not on baptism or any outward ordinance, but on *the state of the heart*. This is true doctrine, but is flatly contradictory of that so much urged by Mr. Campbell in several of his publications.

3. The doctrine, that baptism is necessary to the remission of sins, is flatly contradictory of some of the plainest declarations of the New Testament. Our Saviour declared every *believer* to be justified. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." John iii. 18. But if the believer is not condemned, he is certainly pardoned and justified. Now since every adult must believe in Christ before he is a fit subject of baptism, every believer must be justified before he can be baptized. Moreover, since multitudes of believers are never immersed, and Mr. Campbell will admit nothing short of immersion to be baptism, they must be justified without ever receiving what he calls baptism.

Again, our Saviour said, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." John iii. 36. He does not say, he that believeth, *and hath been baptized;* nor he that believeth *shall have* everlasting life, *if he receive baptism.* But the believer *now has* that life which shall endure for ever. Of course, then, every believer, so soon as he becomes such, is justified; and consequently baptism is not necessary to the remission of sins. In the Lexington Debate, Mr. Campbell sought to evade the force of this clear Scripture declaration, by interpreting the word *hath* to mean, "He has these in grant, in right, according to the will of God."—p. 457. But if only immersion introduces men into the kingdom of Christ, and gives them a title to its blessings, then the unimmersed believer has *not* these blessings in grant or in right. If, as Mr. Campbell has taught, "God forgives men's sins in the act of immersion;" if Peter, in his preaching, "made repentance, or reformation, and immersion, equally necessary to forgiveness;" then it would be as true to say, that the impenitent man hath everlasting life, as to say, that the immersed man hath it.—(*See Chris Bap.* pp. 416, 417.)

Paul the apostle, in the Epistle to the Romans, discusses the great question of the sinner's justification before God, and he comes to this conclusion: "Therefore we conclude

that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. iii. 28. In this whole discussion, in which he declares, that the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, is "unto and upon all them that believe" he does not mention or even allude to baptism, until he comes to answer, in the sixth chapter, a Jewish objection; and he then mentions it only to prove, that justification by faith does not encourage sin.

But Mr. Campbell admits, that every one *who is born of God*, enjoys remission of sins and a title to heaven. Now it is one of the clearest truths, that the new birth is a change of heart from sinfulness to holiness, and has no necessary connection with baptism. Turn to the conversation between our Saviour and Nicodemus, and note the reason given by the Saviour, why men must be born again, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Now turn to the Epistle to the Galatians, and see what the Holy Spirit means by *flesh* and *spirit*. Gal. v. 19–23. Then compare Rom. viii. 1–13. Is it not clear that *flesh* signifies *depravity*, and *spirit* signifies *holiness?* Did not our Lord, then, say in substance, "They who are born of depraved parents, are themselves depraved; and they who are born of the Holy Spirit, are holy?" Why, then, must men be born again? Because they are *depraved*. Then *the being born again* is the removal of that depravity, a change from sinfulness to holiness. This is further proved by 1 John iii. 9, 10. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," &c. The new birth causes men to cease from sin and to work righteousness. It is, therefore, a *moral change*, and not a change of *state* from condemnation to justification. But Mr. Campbell does not pretend, that immersion or baptism changes the *heart*, therefore it cannot be the new birth. In illustrating the new birth to a Jewish teacher, our Lord did use the phrase,

"born of water and of the Spirit;" but he no more meant to teach, that baptism is the new birth, than David meant to intimate, that hyssop could purify him from sin (Psa. li. 7), or than Ezekiel meant to teach, that the sprinkling of clean water would effect the same result (chap. xxxvi. 25–27). It was the habit of inspired men to connect the *sign* and *the thing signified*, the former explaining the nature of the latter. Water, under both dispensations, is the emblem of purification. This Nicodemus understood. The Saviour, therefore, sought to teach him the nature of the new birth by connecting with it the emblem of holiness. Precisely so has Paul done in the Epistles to the Ephesians (chap. v. 26, 27), and to Titus (chap. iii. 5, 6). Since, then, the new birth is a change of heart, which, at least in multitudes of cases, takes place before baptism; and since all who have been born again, do confessedly enjoy remission of sins, it follows, that remissions of sins may be, and most frequently is enjoyed before baptism.

But did not Peter, on the day of Pentecost, command the inquiring Jews to be baptized for the remission of sins? No, he did not. He said, "REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Acts ii. 38. Now, the question is, whether Peter intended to make repentance and baptism equally necessary to the remission of sins; or whether, in accordance with Scripture usage, he simply connected the sign and seal with the thing signified. It is certain, that in other passages repentance, the change of mind, is alone connected with remission. Luke xxiv. 46, 47; Acts v. 31; xi. 18. It is, moreover, certain, that in answering the same inquiry on other occasions, both Peter and Paul omitted to mention baptism. Thus in Acts iii. 19: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Why is not baptism mentioned here? Mr. Campbell saw the difficulty, and therefore undertook the hopeless task of proving, that the word *conversion*,

as used by Peter, signifies *immersion!—Chris. Sys.* pp. 200, 201. No two words in the Bible have meanings more widely differing, as any reader can satisfy himself by taking a concordance, and turning to the places where they occur. Mr. Campbell's failure to make them identical in meaning, is fatal to his doctrine, that baptism is necessary to the remission of sins.

In answer to the same important inquiry, Paul said to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvi. 31. Here salvation (and, of course, remission of sins,) is promised to *faith;* but baptism is not mentioned. It may be objected, that Paul does not mention either repentance or conversion; and yet both are admitted to be essential to salvation. We answer, faith, repentance, and conversion are inseparably connected; and therefore the mention of one implies the others. Can there be in any mind repentance, a change of heart, without conversion, or turning from sin to God? And can these exist without faith, or faith without these? But no one will pretend, that repentance, or conversion, or faith is essentially connected with baptism, especially with *immersion.* It is, therefore, evident, that God has promised remission of sins to *right affections,* not to the reception of ordinances, the administration of which depends upon others, and is often impossible.

But suppose we admit, that in Peter's discourse baptism is the thing connected with the remission of sins; still the passage will not sustain Mr. Campbell's doctrine. The language is, "Be baptized (*eis*) *into* the remission of sins," &c. The meaning of the passage, then, turns upon the word *eis, into.* Does it mean *in order* to remission? That it sometimes has this meaning, is admitted; but it also has other meanings. Indeed *prepositions* in all languages have many meanings, according to the connection in which they occur. Happily we have a precisely similar expression in Matt. iii. 11, which may throw light on Peter's language: "I indeed baptize you

with water *into* (*eis*) repentance." Now, no one pretends that John baptized men *in order* that they might repent. If, then, baptized *into repentance*, does not mean baptized *in order to* repentance, how does it appear, that baptism *into remission of sins*, signifies *in order to* remission of sins? The late learned Professor Stuart, of Andover, whom Mr. Campbell has lauded as one of the first critics of the age, explains the two passages on the same principle, as follows: "A person may be baptized into a thing, (doctrine). So in Matt. iii. 11: 'I baptize you with water into (*eis*) repentance;' *i. e.*, into the profession and belief of the reality and necessity of repentance, involving the idea, that themselves professed to be the subjects of it. So in Acts ii. 38: 'Baptized on account of Jesus Christ into (*eis*) the remission of sins;' that is, into the belief and reception of this doctrine," &c.—*Millen. Harb.* vol. iii. pp. 301, 302.

The doctrine of baptism in order to remission causes injury to two classes of persons. It injures the pious who have not the opportunity to be baptized, by causing them seriously to doubt, if not to despair of salvation. Indeed how can they hope for salvation, if they believe Mr. Campbell's declaration, that Peter made repentance and immersion *equally necessary* to remission of sins? How can they hope for salvation, if they believe, with Mr. Campbell, that the new birth, without which our Lord has said none can see the kingdom of God, is baptism? It injures others by inspiring them with a false confidence that their sins were remitted in the act of being immersed. It dishonours God by representing him as placing *an ordinance* above purity of heart, or at least on a perfect equality with it.

The only other doctrine of Mr. Campbell, which laims particular attention, is his denial of the influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification. He holds, that the Holy Spirit dictated the Scriptures, and confirmed them by miracles and other evidences; and now men must be con-

verted and sanctified by the inspired word. His doctrine is set forth in his *Christianity Restored*, pp. 350, 351, in language too plain to be misunderstood. He says —

"*As the spirit of man puts forth all its moral power in the words which it fills with its ideas, so the Spirit of God puts forth all its converting and sanctifying power in the words which it fills with its ideas.* * * * If the Spirit of God has spoken all its arguments; or, if the New and Old Testaments contain all the arguments which can be offered to reconcile men to God, and to purify them who are reconciled, then all the power of the Holy Spirit which can operate on the human mind is spent; and he that is not sanctified and saved by these, cannot be saved by angels or spirits, human or divine." Again, "We plead *that all the converting power of the Holy Spirit is exhibited in the Divine Record.*"

What strikes us most forcibly, on reading such declarations as these, is the boldness of assertion on a subject of infinite importance, where proof is impossible. That men must become perfectly holy, before they can enter heaven, will not be denied. The question, then, whether they are to subdue all their evil dispositions and affections, and to perfect holiness by their own efforts, in view of the motives and arguments contained in the Scriptures, is of eternal moment. Ninety-nine hundredths of the readers and students of the Bible, in all ages, have understood it to teach, that the Holy Spirit does exert upon the human mind a sanctifying influence, in addition to the influence of the inspired word; have prayed for such influence for themselves and others; and have rejoiced in the assured belief, that they had experienced its happy effects in themselves, and witnessed them in their fellow-men. But Mr. Campbell comes forward with the bold assertion, that the Holy Spirit, like the human spirit, is limited in his power over finite spirits to words and arguments; and that with the use of these his power is spent! What right has he thus to limit the Holy One? Does the

Bible anywhere say, that the Holy Spirit "puts forth all its converting power in the words which it fills with its ideas?" It does not. How, then, dares any man make the assertion? Happy would it have been for Mr. Campbell and his followers, if, on this momentous subject, he had regarded his own rule "to speak of Bible things by Bible words."

Happily, on this subject the language of the Bible is very clear, and the evidence most abundant. We can now adduce only a small part of it.

1. The influence which God has exerted on the minds of wicked men, in the course of his providence, refutes the assertion, that "all the moral power which can be exerted on human beings, is, and must of necessity be, in the arguments addressed to them."—*Chris. Restored*, p. 349. When Ezra went from Babylon to Jerusalem, he sought and obtained from the king a decree in favour of the rebuilding of the temple; and in reference to this, he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem; and hath extended mercy unto me before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes." Ezra viii. 27, 28. Now, it is certain, that the Lord did not influence the hearts of the king and his counsellors by *words* and *arguments;* and yet he did exert a controlling influence over their moral conduct. And when Nehemiah desired to go and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, he prayed thus, "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Neh. i. 11. Did Nehemiah pray that God would influence the king simply by arguments? This will not be pretended. Nehemiah believed that God could exert a different kind of influence, which would be effective; and he believed that his prayer was answered; for he said,

"The king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me." Solomon teaches, that God can exert a controlling influence over the minds of men; for he says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will." Prov. xxi. 1. Much more evidence might be adduced; but it is unnecessary. It is certain that God has exerted, and does exert, on the minds of men a controlling influence, *not* by words and arguments.

2. The Scriptures teach, in language the most unequivocal, that there is a sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit distinct from words and arguments. God said to the Jews, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Would any one understand by such language, simply that God would, by his prophets, reason with them, and exhort them to a right course? The doctrine of a special divine influence is taught by Paul, "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus iii. 5, 6. Would any one think of interpreting such language as meaning nothing more than that men are persuaded by the inspired word to turn to God and serve him? When it is said, "the Holy Ghost *fell on*" Cornelius and his family, all admit an influence different from that of words. Why should not the Holy Spirit "*shed on us*," mean something more than words?

This doctrine is most unequivocally taught by Paul in Eph. ii. 10. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." There is no stronger word than *create*. If, then, a divine influence in addition to the word is not expressed, when men are said to be *created anew* by

God; what language would express the idea? The Bible abounds in similar passages; but these are sufficient.

3. The prayers recorded in the Scriptures teach, that in regeneration and sanctification there is an influence of the Holy Spirit in addition to the word. What did David mean when he offered the following prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psa. li. 10. Did he pray, that God would make known to him some new arguments and reasons for living a holy life? Is it not clear beyond contradiction, that he prayed for a sanctifying influence in addition to the word? What did he mean, when he prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law?" Psa. cxix. 18. He knew the truths of God's word were glorious; but in consequence of his depravity his spiritual vision was dim. He, therefore, prayed for a divine influence to sanctify and enlighten his mind; that he might see the excellency and feel the power of those truths. Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians, "that he (God) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," &c. Eph. iii. 16, 17. Did he pray that they might be strengthened by words and arguments, or by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit? Such prayers are absolutely without meaning or propriety, if it be true, that "the Spirit of God puts forth all its converting and sanctifying power in the words which it fills with its ideas."

Indeed, if the doctrine of Mr. Campbell be true, prayers for the conversion of sinners and for the sanctification of believers, are wholly unavailing and useless. Are they not a solemn mockery? This difficulty occurred to many of Mr. Campbell's followers; and one of them addresses a letter to him on this subject. He says —

"Without any further preface or apology, I will come at once to the object I had in addressing you at this time, and

that is, to ask your opinion whether it be lawful, according to the will of God as revealed to us, to pray for our unconverted friends, that is, to ask God to convert them to the Christian religion? If it be true, as you affirm (and which I am not prepared to controvert), that the righteousness of a Christian is a righteousness by faith in Jesus as the Messiah; that that faith comes alone by hearing or reading the testimony concerning Jesus; and that we have no right to expect any influence superinducing the mind to faith, or even causing the sinner to examine this testimony, or place himself in circumstances for the light of divine truth to shine upon his mind; I say, upon the supposition that these things are so, what right has any one to expect that God will answer his prayers in the behalf of his unconverted friends? * * * When we pray, we are told to pray in faith; and in order that we may pray in faith, as I understand, we should pray for such things as our Heavenly Father has authorized us to expect at his hands, and no other. Now if the Divine Being exercises no other influence over the minds of men than that influence which is derived to them through the words he has spoken to men, and we cannot prevail upon wicked men to give attention to those words, the question is, are we authorized to expect that God will answer our requests in the behalf of such an one? Here is my difficulty, and it has long been a difficulty with me; and I find it is no less so with many of my friends and your friends."—*Millen. Harb.* vol. ii. p. 469.

In his reply Mr. Campbell did not intimate that the writer, and others to whom he refers, had misunderstood his doctrine; nor does he give any satisfactory answer. In the Lexington Debate this unanswerable argument was repeatedly pressed upon him; and he attempted no answer. He could not say, it is not right to pray for the conversion of sinners; for he would thus condemn the apostle Paul, who said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Rom. x. 1. Again, "I exhort,

therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." 1 Tim. ii. 8. He could not say, that prayers for the conversion of sinners will be answered; for then he would admit what he so boldly denies, a divine influence distinct from the inspired word. He must, therefore, teach men to pray to God to do what, according to his doctrine, God has said, he cannot consistently do!

4. The doctrine, that the Holy Spirit renews and sanctifies human beings only by his revealed word, involves the *damnation of infants and idiots.* That infants are depraved, Mr. Campbell distinctly admits. He teaches correctly, "that Adam was not only the common father, but the actual representative of all his children," and then adds, "There is, therefore, a sin of our nature as well as personal transgression. * * * True, indeed, it is, our nature was corrupted by the fall of Adam before it was transmitted to us; and hence that hereditary imbecility to do good, and that proneness to do evil, so universally apparent in all human beings. Let no man open his mouth against the transmission of a moral distemper, until he satisfactorily explain the fact, that the special characteristic vices of parents appear in their children, as much as the colour of their skin, their hair, or the contour of their faces. A disease in the moral constitution of man is as clearly transmissible as any physical taint, if there be any truth in history, biography, or human observation."—*Chris. Sys.* p. 29. Now, since infants are thus depraved, what becomes of those that die in infancy? Without holiness it is certain they cannot enter heaven. It is certain they cannot be sanctified by means of the inspired word. If, then, it be true, as Mr. Campbell contends, that "in conversion and sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the word;" they cannot be sanctified at all. They must, therefore, be lost. The only way to escape the fearful conclusion, would be to deny that infants are depraved;

but this Mr. Campbell admits, and the Bible, as well as daily observation, demonstrates.

5. The doctrine of Mr. Campbell renders the salvation of *believers* perfectly uncertain. It will be admitted, that very few, if any, of them, are perfectly holy. It is certain, that most of them are far from perfection. Now, when any of these are called to die suddenly, if there is no sanctifying influence but that of the truth, and individuals must make themselves perfect under its appeals, what certainty can there be, that they will be prepared for heaven? Most certainly, unless entirely freed from sin, they cannot enter that holy place. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." What assurance has any believer that he will be able to attain, before death, to that perfect holiness, without which he must be excluded from heaven? We turn to God's word, and joyfully adopt the language of the inspired Paul: "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 4–6. With confidence can we exhort Christians, as he did, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 12, 13. With triumph we may say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Phil. iv. 11.

6. Finally, the denial of the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, arises from unscriptural views of the depravity of men. The Bible is perfect. We need no new revelation. It is easily understood, as to all that is essential to salvation. But men are depraved, deeply depraved; therefore they are blind to "the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ." They love sin, and cannot be persuaded to repent, and turn to God. Our Saviour tells us

why men must be renewed by the Holy Spirit, when he says, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John iii. 19. God's word is light; but men love error and sin. Their hearts must be changed, or they will continue to love darkness. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh;" and "the works of the flesh" are only evil. Gal. v. 19–21. Men are "dead in trespasses and sins;" and God only can quicken them. Eph. ii. 1–5. Christ crucified is "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. There must be a divine *call* in addition to the inspired word.

The rejection of the renewing and sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit, is a fatal error. It leaves the hearts of men in all their impurity. The end must be eternal death.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING DISCUSSION.

The preceding discussion, necessarily very brief, authorizes the following conclusions:

1. Mr. Campbell's reformation commenced by assailing *truth and righteousness*, and by favouring and inculcating *destructive error*. It bitterly attacked the ministers of Christ, and heaped upon them multiplied slanders. If any fact is susceptible of demonstration, it is, that Protestant ministers of evangelical denominations, except those supported by civil government, have endured more self-denial than any other class of men, and have preached the gospel for a stinted support; when they might have promoted both ambitious and pecuniary interests far more successfully in other callings. And yet the great reformer of the nineteenth century, whilst growing rich by his reformation, laboured for years to convince the people that they are a venal set of men, actuated

by the most sordid motives! If any truth is clear beyond cavil, it is that Bible Societies and Missionary Societies, and similar institutions, have proved an incalculable blessing to the world. Even Mr. Campbell has, of late, favoured the Baptist Bible Society; and one missionary from his church has gone to Jerusalem! Yet for years, he did more than any other man to cripple those institutions, and to make the impression, that they were unchristian and injurious. If any thing is indisputable, it is, that those who agree to walk together in Christian fellowship, must understand each others' views, both of Scripture doctrine and of church order. Such understanding can be had only by a written statement of views, to which all at least of the officers of the church must solemnly subscribe; and such a statement is a creed.

2. The Campbellite body is "a mixed multitude," whose faith cannot be ascertained, or rather which has no particular faith; without organization or order; overrun with every sort of doctrine, preached by almost all sorts of men; without any tribunal or ecclesiastical authority by which it could be purged of error. In such a body there may be found truly pious people; but when the leading man denies the operation of the Holy Spirit on the human heart, and preaches baptismal justification, it is not to be expected that many such will find either edification or pleasant associations. Certainly, evangelical Christians and churches cannot acknowledge such a body as a church of Jesus Christ. Of this the members of that body cannot complain; since they began their reformation by denouncing the existing churches as daughters of the mother of harlots, and by seeking to overthrow them. When Ishmael's hand is against every man, he cannot complain if the hand of every man is against him. Not in a spirit of retaliation, however, but from a supreme regard for the truth and its glorious Author, would we refuse to fraternize with a body which has no declared faith, which embraces errorists

of all grades, and possesses no means of relieving itself from such evils.

The Presbyterian Church has stated, in her creed, the leading truths which she understands the Bible to teach. Her faith and her testimony have long been before the world. Those who desire to determine whether they shall enter her pale, and those of other denominations who desire to know how far they can fraternize with her, have the means of satisfactory information within their reach. The same may be said of several other churches. But this church without a creed, without unity of faith, without discipline, without purity, whose *father* has rejected fundamental doctrines of Christianity, can have no claims to confidence. Whatever may have been the motives of its founders, they evidently undertook a work to which they were not called of God, and for which they were not qualified, a work of fearful responsibility. The reformation church has now had time to produce its legitimate fruits; and they are not "the fruits of the Spirit." It has all the marks of the weakness and folly of men, "wise in their own conceit." Let those who would not aid in corrupting the faith of the gospel, seek a purer church.

No. 171.

DOES YOUR FAITH GROW?

THE Scriptures say much of faith. One apostle calls it *precious*. Another says, without it we cannot please God. Three things attend a genuine faith. It unites to Christ, so that as a branch derives sap from the vine, the believer draws his life and nourishment from Christ. It also purifies the heart, making the soul wholly averse to sin, and creating longings after holiness. No man can truly believe, and yet lead a careless or wicked life. It also works by love, inflaming the affections, and putting gratitude into lively operation. The believer is not moved by that "fear which hath torment." His soul has alacrity in all its services.

Some of the true people of God are destitute of genius, of personal beauty, of wealth, of health, and of fame. They have none of those things which the world seeks after. But they all have faith. If there is no faith, there is no piety. He that believeth not, has made God a liar. He is condemned already. But he who comes rightly to God, believes both that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Such a faith is itself a light to the soul. He who has it, possesses the secret of walking in darkness, and having no light, and yet trusting in the Lord.

At first this faith is commonly feeble. It is like a grain of mustard seed. It is like a little leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal. Its first cries are faint: "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Its first approaches to Christ are commonly diffident. It rather touches the hem of his garment, than embraces him. The stoutest oak was once so small and tender, that the hoof of the kid might have crushed it.

A weak faith may be as genuine as a strong faith. A drop of dew is as truly water as the ocean. A spark is as truly fire as the large living coal. The smoking flax gives as genuine evidence of heat as the volcano. A great quantity may be spurious, and a small quantity may be of a kind in which there is no mistake. A young infant is as truly a human being as a giant.

But where faith is saving, it will not remain always feeble, but will grow more and more. The true leaven will leaven the whole lump. It surprises no one to see the little infant growing. It ought to be so. Babes in Christ ought to become young men in Christ. They should wax strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Happy is he whose religious character is not like the picture of a child, which never grows at all, but like a living, healthy child itself, which gains vigour every day. The right kind of faith always grows.

To this end trials are sent. At first these are often slight, but the further we advance the sharper they are. A young believer may be nonplussed by a railing word; but by God's grace the day shall yet come when the blazing fagots shall not intimidate him. He, who at first is a disciple secretly for fear of the Jews, in due time begs the body of Jesus, and lays it in his own sepulchre. He who cries out "all these things are against me," shall yet say, "he hath done all things well." The Lord knows what is best for us. He spoils our pleasant things. He crosses our wishes. He defeats our plans. He brings us into straits. He writes vanity on all earthly things.

To be thoroughly tried is a great blessing. Let all men learn to exercise themselves unto godliness. Luther said, "Three things make a good theologian—meditation, temptation, and prayer." Again, "One Christian well tried is worth a thousand." We cannot get along without trials. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Blessed is he who is cast into the furnace, and tried as gold and silver. He shall come forth refined. His distress shall make him cry for help, and the Lord shall hear his voice and his supplication.

But faith must have nutriment as well as exercise. And here is an excellent use of God's word. All its lessons are good to the believer. Its warnings make him afraid to sin. Its encouragements fill him with matchless heroism. Its precepts form a perfect rule for the guidance of his life. Its doctrines are heavenly manna. The word of God strengthens faith so as nothing else can do. For this it has a natural fitness. God's word is pure, and strong, and unfailing. It

liveth and abideth for ever. It is life and it is spirit. By the power of the Holy Ghost the truth is made effectual, and that to the joy of the pious heart. God's word is sweet to the believer. He receives the witness of God.

Faith is also much strengthened by beholding the examples set before it. Paul gives us many such in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. The history of the martyrs is mighty in strengthening the faith of God's elect. One patient sufferer in a community often does more to inspire confidence in his brethren than many sermons. Indeed it is the patience of the saints that publishes, and, in the common mind, establishes the truth of the doctrines preached from our pulpits. We could not do without patterns of piety, examples of living faith. Many suffer as they do that they may show how the grace of God can bear them up, and bear them on, and bear them through. In them we see what God's mercy can accomplish. We follow their faith, and receive the end thereof, eternal life. Examples have great power. They very clearly mark out our duty. They show us that it can be done. They rouse us to imitation. They are of excellent use in strengthening our faith.

A growing faith is a great blessing. Paul says, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all aboundeth, so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God." Such Christians do exploits. Their love is mighty. Their confidence is not presumption. Their boldness is not impudence. Their boasting is not vainglory. They are thankful for mercies, submissive to hardships, ready for life, prepared for death. They shall not be afraid of evil tidings. They shall not be afraid with any amazement. Their hope, as an anchor of the soul, is cast in heaven, from whence also they look for the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion their vile body like to his glorious body. When the world shall be filled with such Christians, earth shall keep jubilee, and universal joy shall prevail.

Does your faith grow? Do you habitually remember that all things change but God, that all duration is short but eternity, that all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field? Are you made better by the solemn thoughts which faith presents? Are you hardened by solemn events?

In reviewing the past have you a heart to count up God's wonders of mercy—how many cups of cold water, how many narrow escapes, timely warnings, seasonable rebukes, sweet encouragements you have received? His mercies are more than the hairs of your head. It is of the Lord's mercies that you have not been consumed. Does your faith more and more see his hand, his love, in all these good things?

And do you bless him for his rod also? Things grievous have come to you. Have they been sanctified to your good? Have they humbled you? Have they caused great heart-searchings? Have they made prayer sweet to your soul? While nature weeps, does grace thrive? When you read history, is it as an atheist, or as a Christian? Do God's wonders to his people of old strengthen your faith? Do you love to recount the mighty deeds whereby he delivered the confessors from death, the martyrs from weakness and suffering? Can you trust and adore the God of history?

Can you commit the whole future to the Lord? This year, this day you may die. Is your heart increasingly confident in the Lord? Your times are in his hand. Would you have it otherwise? Is he not a rock? Are not his ways perfect? Can you trust him at all times?

Prophecy shall be fulfilled. The gospel shall achieve new triumphs. Thrones shall fall. Society shall assume new phases. Freedom shall gain inch by inch. On earth a thousand changes shall take place. Do you consent to be absent from earth and present with the Lord? Does your faith look upward? Have you set your affection on things above? Do you long to be at rest in the bosom of God? Would you live always? Do you live as seeing him, who is invisible?

Does your love increase? If so, your faith grows also. It is a great thing to have the heart influenced with love. It is heaven on earth to have a heart full of all kindness, forgiveness, good wishes, kindly sentiments, and dispositions to oblige. Abundant love shows growing faith.

If your faith is not growing, be alarmed, think on your ways, inquire what ails you, turn to God, and cry, "LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH."

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No. 172.

A TIME TO DANCE.

"A TIME TO DANCE."—ECCL. III. 4.

TIME is a term commonly used to indicate the measure of motion, or to signify the duration of anything. This is its primary import. But there is a secondary sense in which it is employed to convey the idea of opportunity, the favourable or fitting occasion for doing anything or forbearing to do it. The use of the term in this secondary sense is not unusual in the inspired writings. As Eccl. viii. 5, "A wise man's heart discerneth both *time* (the proper or favourable occasion for doing or not doing a thing) and judgment." It is by some supposed, that the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes designed the word, as used in these verses, from which my text is taken, to be understood as meaning a fitting occasion. "*To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.*" That is, there is an opportunity, both favourable and suitable, afforded to man in the course of his life, for performing or ceasing to do whatever he may purpose or choose, that comes within the range of his capacities. The language therefore implies the lawfulness and propriety of the several things particularly enumerated: "A time to kill and a time to heal; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance." That is, there are occasions in the course of man's history, when it is lawful for him to take life away, and again there are other occasions when it is his duty to

endeavour to preserve it, if imperilled by disease. There are occasions in which it is fit and proper that men should shed tears of mourning, and again there are occasions which call for hilarity. and render it right and becoming for them to dance.

But there is another way of explaining the mode of expression in this passage, which is more in accordance with the evident design of the writer. This explanation confines the word *time* to its more strict meaning and considers it as equivalent to the word *period*. In this view Solomon is understood as merely affirming that certain things actually occur in human history without any reference to the lawfulness or unlawfulness, the fitness or unfitness of these things. There is a time—a period during which men actually do mourn, and then there comes another period in which they are found rejoicing in the dance. He is speaking of the mutability of human affairs, the inconstancy of man's condition. He is painfully affected in contemplating the fact well known and ever newly confirmed by bitter experiences, that the history of man is a history of the most singular vicissitudes. Now he is enjoying life and anon he is at the gate of death. One while he is at the pinnacle of prosperity, the next moment he is tumbled down into the abyss of poverty. To-day the welling tide of grief finds vent only in bitter sobs and scalding tears; to-morrow forgetful of his sorrow he is whirling in the giddy dance amid mirth and laughter. Such is the changeful life of man; and of this fact the Holy Spirit here speaks, as full of instruction to the considerate. But as respects the specific changes instanced, there is nothing here determined as to whether they are proper or improper, right or wrong. So that it is plainly a mere frivolous wresting of the Scriptures which those are guilty of, who allege anything from this place as giving sanction to the indulgence of their hate or their lusts.

I will not, however, at present insist upon the interpretation of this Scripture, just given, as the only correct one. So far as relates to the words selected as a foundation for the present remarks, you may consider them as not only containing the statement of a fact, but also that in this statement there is an implied admission that there is a fitting season for the doing of the thing here mentioned. In other words, I mean to admit not merely that there is a time when men do dance, but that there is a time when they may dance without impropriety.

Having made this admission, it will be necessary to add some further remarks in the way of explanation of the word *to dance*, as it is made use of in the Scriptures. For it would be a great mistake for any one to suppose that it imports that fashionable amusement so much admired and so constantly indulged in by the gay world. So far is this from being the case, that in our text it is not expressive of any kind of amusement at all, but is simply equivalent to the word "rejoice," without having any particular regard to the precise manner in which this rejoicing may find expression. This is manifest, both from the antithesis in which the term is put with the word "to mourn," and also from the paralellism of the two clauses of the verse. In the first clause, laughing is opposed to weeping, and in the last clause mourning to dancing; and the plain, simple idea conveyed by the whole is, that there is a time for sadness and a time for joy. So David says, (Ps. xxx. 11,) "*Thou hast turned for me my* MOURNING *into* DANCING: *thou hast put off my* SACKCLOTH *and girded me with* GLADNESS." And Jeremiah expresses his own and Israel's melancholy reverses, by saying (Lam. v. 15) "*The joy of my heart is ceased: our* DANCE *is turned into* MOURNING."

The words *dance*, *dances*, *danced* and *dancing*, are found in the English version of the Bible twenty-six times. Of these five are in the New Testament, and the rest in the

Old. There are four different Hebrew words which our translators have rendered occasionally by the word *dance*.

The simple idea fundamental to all these words and that which they all convey is that of lively motion either by leaping, jumping, bounding, skipping, whirling round and round, or reeling to and fro. They do not of themselves determine whether these motions are regular according to some studied method, or governed merely by the sudden and irregular impulse of feeling. As to this point all that can, with any certainty be said is, that when used in connection with music, either instrumental or vocal, it is natural to suppose that the motions of the body indicated by them were so regulated as to keep time with the music. And this seems to be the proper signification of the two Greek words in the N. T., which are translated *dance*. The one ὠρχήσασθε (Matt. xi. 17; xiv. 6.) meaning any dance to the sound of music; and the other χορῶν (Luke xv. 25.) a choral dance, in which a chorus or choir of singers or players upon instruments keep time with the motions of their feet or bodies to the strains of the music. It is in this fact that we discover the reason why the English translators make use of the terms they have, in endeavouring as nearly as possible to convey the exact idea contained in the original. For the verb *to dance*, in our tongue, signifies, "to make certain motions or movements with the feet, corresponding to the sound and tune of music." Yet it is necessary to observe, if we would avoid attaching wrong notions to those places in Scripture where dancing is mentioned, that we must dissociate from the word those ideas which have their origin in the practices of modern times.

It may assist in the right understanding of this matter to bring into one view the several passages in which this exercise is mentioned. The first is in Exod. xv. 20, where we are told that when the children of Israel were engaged in singing the song of triumph over the Egyptian host upon

the shore of the Red Sea, "Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." The next instance is recorded in Exod. xxxii. 19, and is a part of the narrative of Israel's idolatrous worship before the golden calf. "*And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp that he saw the calf and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.*" In Judges xi. 34, we read that as Jephthah returned from the slaughter of the Ammonites to his house at Mizpeh, "*his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances,*" in honour of the victory her father had obtained over the enemies of Israel. When the strife between the other tribes and little Benjamin had come to an open war, and after a protracted and bloody struggle there remained but a handful of that heroic tribe, in order to prevent its utter extinction, and at the same time to preserve inviolate the oath which had been sworn by the rest of the nation, not to give their daughters in marriage to the men of Benjamin, it was arranged that the children of Benjamin should take advantage of a festival which the daughters of Shiloh celebrated, and lying concealed when they came out to dance in dances, should seize upon them and carry them into their own land as their wives. (Judges xxi. 21, 23.) When David had met and slain the Philistine, Goliath, the giant of Gath, who defied the armies of Israel, as he returned from the field of battle with the victorious host, "the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music." (1 Sam. xviii. 6.) When upon another occasion the Amalekites had made an incursion into the southern part of Judah, and David, guided by an Egyptian servant, who had been left behind by the party, came up with them, he found them "*spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking and*

dancing, (reeling as drunken men,) *because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.*" (1 Sam. xxx. 16.) During the religious ceremonies attending the removal of the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David, the king, elated at the propitious event, and filled with pious enthusiasm, "*danced before the Lord with all his might*," girded with a linen ephod. (2 Sam. vi. 14. 16. 1 Chr. xv. 29.) In the New Testament two instances of dancing are mentioned, one on the occasion of keeping the birth-day of Herod, when "the daughter of Herodias *danced* (ὠρχήσατο) before them and pleased Herod." (Matt. xiv. 6.) The other is in the story of the prodigal son, whose return was indicated to his elder brother by the joyous sound of music and *dancing*, (χορῶν) which he heard as he drew near to the house. (Luke xv. 25.) In that graphic delineation which is given in the book of Job, of the character and conduct of the prosperous wicked, who say unto God, "Depart from us for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," we are told that "*they send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.*" (Job xxi. 11.) The Prophet Jeremiah, in depicting the future glory and beauty and joy of the Church, says, "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the *dances* of them that make merry." * * "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the *dance*, both young men and old together; for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow." (Jer. xxxi. 4, 13.) And twice in the book of Psalms, a command is given and a call made to men to praise God "*in the dance.*" (Ps cxlix. 3, cl. 4.)

Now in all these instances, with two, or at most three exceptions, it is perfectly evident that the dancing spoken of was not promiscuous between the sexes. The only two

cases in which it might be contended with any plausibility that the dancers consisted of persons of both sexes are, first, that of the profane multitude who tempted God at the foot of Horeb; as it is written "*the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play:*" and, second, that godless crowd who, as they revel in luxury and pleasure, impiously ask, "*What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?*" It would not at all surprise me, if one should find evidence, that the dancing of the persons described in these verses, was in some respects closely similar to the promiscuous movements of male and female dancers in the parlours and ball-rooms of modern fashionable society. At all events, however in other respects they may be dissimilar, in this surely they very well agree, that, for the most part, they fear not God, neither regard the operation of his hands. The terrors of the holy and fiery law of God, have not more effect to restrain the lusts of the laughing crowd that in midnight dances pay their devotions to some warrior hero, than had the thunder and flame of Sinai as it smoked and quaked beneath Jehovah's tread, to deter idolatrous Israel from the mad worship of the golden calf.

In the Scriptures, whenever dancing is spoken of with any intimation of its being approved, it is as a religious exercise; not promiscuous, but performed mainly, if not exclusively, by select bands of females; not resembling in any wise the revellings of modern society, except that the motions of the body were regulated, to some extent, by the sound of music. "The character of the ancient dance," says Kitto, "was very different from that of ours, as appears from the conduct of Miriam, who took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. Precisely similar is the oriental dance of the present day, which, accompanied of course with music, is led by the principal person of the company, the

rest imitating the steps. The evolutions, as well as the songs, are extemporaneous — not confined to a fixed rule, but varied at the pleasure of the leading dancer; and yet they are generally executed with so much grace, and the time so well kept with the simple notes of the music, that the group of attendants show wonderful address and propriety in following the variations of the leader's feet." Amongst the Greeks, such a band of singers and dancers were styled the χορὸς—chorus—choir: and it was a company of either hired or voluntary performers (probably servants of the household,) composing such a chorus as is meant, when in the story of the prodigal son it is said, the elder brother as he drew near to the house heard within the sound of "music and dancing."

"At a very early period," says Kitto again, "dancing was enlisted into the service of religion among the heathen; the dance, enlivened by vocal and instrumental music, was a usual accompaniment in all the processions and festivals of the gods (Strabo); and indeed so indispensable was this species of violent merriment, that no ceremonial was considered duly accomplished—no triumph rightly celebrated, without the aid of dancing." "Dancing," says Anthon, "was common among the Romans in ancient times in connection with religious festivals and rites, and was practised, according to Servius, because the ancients thought that no part of the body should be free from the influence of religion." "Dancing, however, was not performed by any Roman citizens, except in connection with religion; and it is only in reference to such dancing that we are to understand the statements that the ancient Romans did not consider dancing disgraceful, and that not only freemen, but the sons of senators and noble matrons practised it. In the later times of the Republic, we know that it was considered highly disgraceful for a freeman to dance.

It is evident, therefore, that anciently, dancing was rank-

ed along with other methods of religious worship, and only so far esteemed becoming the dignity of man, as it could be made subservient to the quickening his pious affections into greater activity, or to the giving fuller play to those affections when highly excited. For such purposes it was made use of by the Jews upon extraordinary occasions; such as the victory over the Philistines, when they rendered praise to God for delivering them from their invaders; or upon the more ordinary occasion of their annual religious and national festivals; or in the temple service. And an exercise of this sort was in perfect harmony with the other splendid and complicated ceremonials of that gorgeous ritual, which was instituted for the preservation and instruction of the church, during the period of her minority, and under an administration which served only as a shadow of good things to come. But since the handwriting of those burdensome ordinances was blotted out by Jesus Christ, when he nailed them to the tree, and a more enlarged administration, as well as a simpler worship has taken place in the church, choral dancing no longer seems appropriate in the sanctuary, nor was it ever made a part of the religious exercises of the primitive Christians. Their feelings of religious joy found utterance in psalms and hymns of praise, chanted to the simplest tunes, agreeably to the direction of the apostle, "*Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*"

If, however, any are not content with adhering to the simplicity of manners and of worship which adorned the profession of the first Christians, but will insist that as our text affirms, so there certainly is "*a time to dance,*" I will not dispute the matter with them further, but will admit it to be so. I will agree that there are times and seasons when men may perhaps do well to praise God in the dance; as did Miriam upon the shores of the Red Sea, or David, when he danced before the ark of God, even at the risk of being despised as one of the "*vain fellows.*"

Let us say then that a time to dance is such as this;

1. When in answer to fervent and importunate prayer, God removes affliction or calamity from a person, a family, a church or a commonwealth. In such a change there is oftentimes produced so great a reaction of feeling in the soul, from deep depression to exuberance of joy, that it is with difficulty the transition can be credited as real. One is ready to take up as his own the song of the pilgrims from Babylon—"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream; then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. * * The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." And the ecstacy of delight which fills the heart of the released mourner finds expression in singing, and shouting, and laughing, and dancing.

2. When upon a soul that has been walking in darkness God lifts up the light of his countenance, and after having for a season withdrawn the sensible evidences of his favour, restores again to him the joys of salvation. Now the reclaimed and revived saint may take down his unstrung harp from the willows, and tuning it anew to the songs of Zion, go forth in the dance of them that rejoice in the Lord, who "gives light in darkness, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

3. When the devices of those that devise evil counsel against the church are brought to naught, and the enemies of Christ and his people are broken and scattered, and their power for harm destroyed. Let the victory thus granted to his church call forth the highest tribute of praise to Him that sits and rules as King in Zion; let Miriam seize once more her timbrel and lead the dance of the daughters of Israel, whilst they sing to Jehovah who triumphs gloriously over all his foes.

4. When the prodigal, who has wasted his substance in riotous living, thinks upon his ways with penitential sorrow,

and returns from his wandering in the paths of folly and sin, back to his heavenly Father's house; then celebrate the happy event with music and dancing, for it is meet to make merry and be glad when the dead are alive and the lost are found. Yes, such an event claims at our hands unwonted demonstrations of joy, for it is an event that thrills the celestial choir, and strings their harps anew. A soul emancipated from the slavery of sin! a criminal, condemned to die, freely and fully pardoned! a sinner saved! a child of hell made an heir of heaven!—surely a change so strange, so great, may well cause the "*lame man to leap as a hart, and make the tongue of the dumb sing.*" The penitent prodigal, the pardoned sinner, the reconciled believer, if he will, may leap and dance, whilst he sings in chorus with a gladsome church,

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see."

If these be the occasions when it is fitting that men should praise God in the dance, then may I not safely decide when it is *not* a time to dance? Surely it is not a time to dance when the judgments of God are abroad in the earth—when the hearts of men are failing them because of those things that are coming upon the world—when the ways of Zion mourn because few come to her solemn feasts—when the quickening power of the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the church—when men are hastening in mad and careless crowds to the judgment bar of heaven without Christ, and having no hope in the world. Shall a nation to whom God is speaking in wrath, as he scatters upon it the burning coals of pestilence, or hurls against it the thunder-bolts of war—shall such a nation dance? Shall men condemned to eternal death, with the burning pit of hell before them, and avenging Justice swift pursuing them

—shall such men make merry? Ah, no! The voice of reason, of conscience, of Scripture, of God's Spirit, all—all call such to mourning instead of dancing—to sackcloth instead of feasting.

These, however, are not the only results at which we arrive from a careful and candid examination of the Bible teachings upon the subject under discussion. There are other and not less important conclusions to which these teachings inevitably lead us, respecting that dancing which is practised to so large an extent in every circle of society; from the imported Italian or French danseuse, the admired star of the Opera or the Theatre, who, Salome like, turns at once the heads of Princes and of fops, down through the whole range of ball-room revelers, holiday soldiers, pleasure loving philanthropists, elegant and accomplished beaux and belles in respectable christian parlours, until we reach the wild midnight wake of the miserable Irish hovel, or the bacchanalian orgies of the public stew. And what are these conclusions? I answer,

First.—that no countenance is afforded by the word of God to the practice of this fashionable amusement. It is more unlike that religious exercise which is spoken of in the Scriptures, heretofore explained, as sacred to the worship of God, than are the psalms of David, or the Song of songs, to the odes of Anacreon or of Horace. It has its counterpart not in the graceful though unstudied movements of the sister of Moses, prompted by the impulse of pious emotion, but in the voluptuous pantomime of the daughter of Herodias impelled by vanity and leading to crime. It is a corrupt and corrupting practice, derived to modern society from the public games and private amusements of the Greeks and Romans, at which slaves and courtesans entertained the spectators and guests with an exhibition of their persons and their skill, in dances scarcely less indecent than the *pas de deux* of a common theatrical performance, or the immodest

waltz of a social parlour party of five hundred particular friends. Without the least hesitation it may be affirmed, that this fashionable amusement, as taught by French Monsieurs and Mesdames, whether to children or grown up boys and girls, and as indulged in by a thoughtless world, at soirees, at fairs, at weddings, or at balls, belongs to the forbidden category of "chambering and wantonness," which the Spirit of God has associated with "rioting and drunkenness."

SECOND,—this amusement can never with propriety be participated in by Christians. This proposition would appear to be so necessary a corollary from what has already been said, as to require no further proof. Is this amusement but the remnant of the licentious customs of heathenism, an exercise which it was reserved for slaves and courtesans alone to cultivate? is it so utterly devoid of countenance from the holy word of God, and does it necessarily imply the making of provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof? then surely one might suppose that no Christian could regard it as a thing in which he could innocently participate. But nevertheless there are Christians who can see no harm, they say, in mere dancing; who think people must have some such recreation; who go into ecstacies of delight at the charming sight of the little ones whom God has given them to be trained for heaven, whirling amid the fascinating mazes of the *petit bal*—Christians, who are oftener seen at the dancing party, than at the prayer meeting; and who, though they cannot stand upright during a ten minutes prayer in the house of God, can keep upon their feet to the sound of the piano or fiddle until the dawning of the morning—Christians, who never could understand why the ministers of the gospel should be so uncompromising toward the world, and not make piety more attractive by showing that it is not incompatible with pleasure. For the sake of this class of professing Christians, as well as to disabuse the

gospel we preach, from the charge of being opposed to real enjoyment, it is proper to assign some special additional reasons in support of the opinion we entertain as announced in the proposition, that a Christian cannot with propriety participate in the fashionable amusement of dancing.

1ST. It is beyond all contradiction, and by way of eminence, known to be a worldly amusement. It belongs to the men and women of this world by long prescriptive right. It cannot be placed alongside of those things which all men have in common with each other, and the doing or not doing of which in no wise marks a Christian as distinguished from another man. This amusement may not be classed with conversation or reading, with walking, jumping, riding, hunting, and some less athletic recreations. It does not stand on a footing with some children's plays, which enliven the domestic fire-side. It belongs to the same class of dissipating recreations as horse-racing, card-playing and theatrical exhibitions. I know there are professing Christians who esteem these last named amusements as harmless, and whose consciences are no hindrance to their occupying a box at the theatre, or taking a hand at whist. But how little difference the man of the world recognizes between himself and such professors, we know but too well. What remains to show that the Christian has renounced the vanities of the world, and been crucified to its follies, when the hand of a godless partner has been accepted for the next reel or polka? Alas! she who has been whirling round the ball-room for half the night clasped by the hands of some flattering debauchee, needs, methinks, to spend many days of fasting and penitential sorrow, before she comes again to handle and taste of the body and blood of the crucified Jesus. The sad experiences of not a few wanderers, who still remember with shame and tears the steps of their backslidings, more than sufficiently attest the correctness of what I have said.

2ND. Those who engage in this amusement with most avidity, and advocate it with greatest zeal, do not propose to praise or worship God in it. It may safely be affirmed that the vast majority of such persons, so far from esteeming the honour of God in what they do, curse him in their hearts. The God that made them, and before whom they must shortly appear to give an account of the deeds done in the body, is not in all their thoughts. They love the dance all the more because it helps them to forget him, and they can so easily drown all serious thoughts of "a judgment to come" in the intoxication of pleasure. And the sight of those whom they know to be professed followers of Christ mingling in the giddy throng with themselves, only serves to render the task an easier one. This is a fact attested by too many sad examples to be disputed. No one ever went to a dancing party with the expectation of having his religious affections quickened into new life. Did any one ever return from the excitement of such a party without feeling that those affections were chilled? But supposing that here and there one may be found who, in the midst of such scenes, is unseduced, the vigour of his piety remaining unimpaired, these form only the exception; the usual effect remains the same. Thoughts of eternity suit not the unbridled gaiety of the cotillion party; and men who are considered exemplary for godly living are not often named as floor managers upon such occasions. The duties of that post suit much better those who "have cast off fear and restrain prayer before God;" who sneer at the rigidness of puritanic piety, and think apostolic Christianity "a religion unfit for a gentleman."

3RD. This amusement, as practised, is highly injurious to health. I mention this because not a few are beguiled into sending their children to dancing schools, through the influence of those who represent it as a healthful recreation. Now this plea might have in it some force, if this exercise

was performed in the open air, and in the ordinary dress of every day life. But how far otherwise it is, every body very well knows. The thin dress, the tightly laced corsets, the heated room, the oppressive atmosphere, the unnatural hours, all tell of disease and death, instead of health-bringing relaxation. Surely it is not rosy-cheeked health that keeps the entrance to those places where youth and beauty assemble, to spend the wakeful hours of night in dissipation; no, it is CONSUMPTION with gaunt and pallid form, that stands sentinel there, breathing his icy, poisonous breath upon the face of the laughing crowd.*

I remember to have heard a gentleman of some literary fame, in a lecture, not long since, very wittily indeed, describe those who objected to dancing as an amusement, as "a long-faced and sour-visaged" set of fellows. The stroke of humour was given apparently with great satisfaction to the artist, and was received with no small merriment by the audience. Now, without disputing the correctness of the picture, or stopping to suggest that it is not unlikely many of the persons thus flippantly disposed of would readily challenge a comparison with the most rotund visaged, giggling dancer, in the matter of substantial enjoyment of the

* "As a hygienic method it is obnoxious to several strictures. *First*: It partakes too largely of the character of an amusement to admit of sufficient muscular exertion, without generating a love of pleasure; which, once established, will render all exercise, not productive of immediate enjoyment, tasteless and irksome. Thus, this kind of exercise may be said to be self-limited. *Second:* Children and young persons, when prepared for dancing school or dancing parties, are generally dressed in a way that is unfavourable to the free action of their limbs; and, what is of far greater moment, of the muscles of respiration. *Third:* They are crowded into an apartment where the air is heated and impure; and often too, at night, during the very hours when they ought, according to their physiology, to be asleep. *Fourth:* Some, who have frail and delicate nervous systems, are injured by the music so long acting upon them. *Fifth:* They are all liable to be injured by the eating and drinking which too often prevail. Dancing, in fact, is much more a means of disciplining the muscles, than of giving them vigour. As a method of exercise in childhood and youth, it is insufficient; and as a method of amusement, in after years, it is neglected by those, who, physiologically speaking, most require it."—Drake's Diseases of the Valley of North America. Vol. 1. pp. 698, 699.

sweets of domestic and social life, it may admit of a fair question, whether, in so far as respects every thing essential to man's true dignity and high destiny, a "long face" is not more becoming than a bloated one, and a sad or sour visage than one which dissipation has rendered haggard, pale, effeminate or sottish. Give me the tearful eye of the praying saint, before the bloodshot, languid look of the devotee of lust. If my face must be marked with premature furrows, and my vigour exhausted by midnight watchings, let my vigils be like those of the Man of sorrows, and not such as are kept by the worshippers at fashion's meretricious shrine.

4TH. The promiscuous dance is incompatible with modesty. This remark may be applied to the children's dance in the parlour, and to the dancing of grown up men and women in other places, according to the measure of each. The evil indeed, begins in the dancing school, which, instead of being called a school of easy manners, ought rather to be styled a place where girls are taught to substitute the finesse of the coquette for true female delicacy, and boys take their primary lessons in the art of seduction.

But suppose we yield you these two points, and except in your favour the dancing school, and the social parlour quadrille, would you be satisfied? Will you stop here? Can you assure us or yourselves that your children will be content with this amount of indulgence?* Have you spent so much money in having them taught this very desirable accomplishment, and now shall they not have liberty to show how attentive they have been to their culture, and what proficiency they have made? Shall the little boys and girls dance, and not the young men and maidens, the old men and matrons? No one can sincerely expect a condition of things like this. Why then do so many people plead for

* This experiment has more than once been tried; with what sort of success let the sad regrets of over-indulgent parents and pastors bear witness.

the innocence of having children taught this accomplishment, and permitting well-regulated dances at weddings and tea-parties, yet pretend a pious disapprobation of ball-room and theatre dancing? Is not dancing the same thing in effect every where? Are not the same steps, the same bodily movements, the same dances taught in the school that are practised on the stage? Why then should Mary, grown to woman's years, be blamed for practising what the child, Mary, was taught to love and call an elegant accomplishment?

The truth is, if the dancing you condemn is immodest and improper, that which you approve is so too. And it is in this view of the matter that it has long been agreed by eminent christian men, that an indulgence in this amusement is inconsistent with that purity which is required by the seventh commandment. Hence in the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, under the list of particular sins forbidden by that commandment, "*lascivious dancings*" are included. How justly entitled to this denomination are the most fashionable dances of the present day, I submit to the candid judgment of every Christian who knows any thing on the subject. I do not say that no one can be chaste or modest who dances. But that there is an incompatibility, an incongruity between that delicate modesty which ought ever to characterize the intercourse of the sexes, and the promiscuous dances now so almost universal, I unhesitatingly affirm. Whether it be that most lascivious of all exhibitions, the ballet dancing of a French Opera, or the vile round of polkas and waltzes* performed by young and old

*The Waltz.—"As many of the retired matrons of this city, unskilled in 'gestic lore,' are doubtless ignorant of the movements and figures of this modest exhibition, I will endeavour to give some account of it in order that they may learn what odd capers their daughters sometimes cut, when from under their guardian wings. On a signal being given by the music, the gentleman seizes the lady round her waist; the lady scorning to be outdone in courtesy, very politely takes the gentleman round the neck, with one arm resting against his shoulder to prevent encroach-

at parties and weddings, makes small odds. All must be alike hurtful to true purity of heart; all ought to be abhorred by him that would follow the command of Paul to "flee youthful lusts," and by her that would heed the charge of the Apostle to Christian women "to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety."

5TH. Indulgence in this amusement is inconsistent with that Christian sobriety, vigilance, and prayerfulness, to which we are called by our circumstances, in the midst of a world that lies in wickedness, and in view of the near approach of death and judgment. "Watch and pray," said Christ to his disciples, "lest ye enter into temptation." "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." "Let us," says Paul, "who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation." "Be sober, be vigilant;" says Peter, "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." And again, "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer."

ments. Away then they go, about, and about, and about—'About what, sir?' About the room, madam, to be sure. The whole economy of this dance consists in turning round and round the room in a certain measured step, and it is truly astonishing that this continued revolution does not set all their heads swimming like a top; but I have been positively assured that it only occasions a gentle sensation, which is marvellously agreeable. In the course of this circumnavigation, the dancers, in order to give the charm of variety are continually changing their relative situations—now the gentleman, meaning no harm in the world, I assure you, madam, carelessly flings his arm about the lady's neck, with an air of celestial impudence; and anon, the lady meaning as little harm as the gentleman, takes him round the waist with most ingenious, modest languishment, to the great delight of numerous spectators and amateurs, who generally form a ring, as the mob do about a pair of Amazons pulling caps, or a couple of fighting mastiffs. After continuing this divine interchange of hands, arms, et cetera, for half an hour or so, the lady begins to tire, and 'with eyes upraised,' in most bewitching languor, petitions her partner for a little more support. This is always given without hesitation. The lady leans gently on his shoulder; their arms entwine in a thousand seducing, mischievous curves—don't be alarmed, madam—closer and closer they approach each other, and in conclusion, the parties being overcome with ecstatic fatigue, the lady seems almost sinking into the gentleman's arms, and then—'Well, sir! what then?' (Why) madam, how should I know?"—WASHINGTON IRVING.

With such admonitions and warnings sounding in their ears, how can Christians plunge headlong into the dissipations of an unfriendly world? Men are continually undone by things that are beyond all doubt lawful and even necessary. Why then increase the perils of immortal souls, by giving sanction to things, in themselves, at least of questionable propriety? Intoxicating pleasures, possessing a power of fascination, by far the fewest number have strength to resist. Oh, Christians, if you have any compassion for dying souls, for their sakes "be not conformed to this world."

6TH. If professing christians are seen engaging in the giddy dance, unconverted men will take occasion, from their conduct, to scoff at the religion they profess, and to contemn the name of Christ. It is only to practise a delusion upon oneself for any to indulge the thought that it can be otherwise. I cannot well imagine a more speedy method of teaching a careless young man to despise the Christian name, than for some female acquaintance, whom he has seen at the communion table, to become his partner in the dance. Nor is anything probably more usual in such a case, than for those who look on, quietly to pass the ungracious whisper, "See that pious dancer—why she waltzes as if she had been accustomed to it—she seems to love it as much as any of us poor sinners—a pretty Christian to be sure." This is no fancy sketch, they know little of the world who suppose it to be so; for that which Cicero did not hesitate to call "a vice that no one would be guilty of till he had utterly abandoned all virtue; and that which follows riot and debauchery, as the shadow follows the body,"*

* "Cato styles L. Murena a dancer. If this be truly alleged it is the reproach of a fierce accuser; if falsely, it is the slander of a reviler. Since then in this you may have influence, you ought not, M. Cato, to catch up a slander from the street or from some convivial assembly of scoffers, nor lightly call a Consul of the Roman people a dancer; but consider with what other vices he must be corrupted against whom this could be charged with truth. For almost no one ever dances who is sober, unless he be a madman; neither in solitude, nor at temperate and decent enter.

I take it, is now, in the middle of the nineteenth century, well understood by unconverted men, not to consist with what ought reasonably to be looked for in genuine Christian character.*

For reasons like these, of the soundness of which time and observation have more fully satisfied my mind, I still entertain the opinion several years ago publicly expressed, that dancing cannot with propriety be participated in by Christians. And by Christians, whilst I mean especially those who have been admitted to the Lord's supper, I do not mean them exclusively. I wish to be understood as comprehending under the name all the baptized. And it seems necessary to state this particularly, in order to correct a not uncommon mistake. Many think that if they have never come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they are not members of the church, and it is not inconsistent for them to live and act as the ungodly world. And so I have heard a Christian parent urge that it was not improper for her children to go to the dancing school, though she considered it inconsistent for a communicant to dance. But are not all baptized children members of the church?

tainments. Of a seasonable banquet, of an agreeable place, of many pleasant recreations, dancing is the last (or basest) accompaniment. You impute to me that which is necessarily the lowest of vices, and yet you pass over those things which being discarded this vice surely could not exist. No shameful banquet, no wanton love, no revel, no debauch, no prodigality is shown; and since none of those things are proved that have the name of pleasure, and which are vicious, do you think to find that which attends only upon sensual excess in him, in whom you cannot find even excess itself?"—Cicero Orat. pro L. Murena, vi. 13.

* It is true, indeed, that the sneers of the world are no more to regulate the conduct of the Christian, than its smiles. It may object against him for too rigid abstinence, as they did against John the Baptist; or he may be reproached for over-indulgence as was Jesus Christ. The truly wise will justify those who show a wholesome discretion in a seasonable doing or not doing of things lawful. But yet we are not at liberty to disregard the report of "them that are without." Christians are to avoid the appearance of evil, and not to be conformed to this world. It is necessary, therefore, to listen to what the world thinks and says about certain practices, in order to form a right judgment as to whether indulgence in them is forbidden by these precepts.

and are not members of the church bound to live as Christians? If so, where the propriety in Christian parents sending their children to learn that which, as Christians, it would be unbecoming in them to practise, and which they must unlearn and renounce as a preparatory step towards being admitted into the full communion of God's people? The whole thing is sufficiently plain; "the wayfaring man though a fool, need not err" in regard to it. If it is incompatible with Christian character for a communicant to dance, it is scarcely less so for the baptized to dance; and therefore the parent, who has presented his child to receive this seal of the covenant and sign of his engrafting into Christ, is unfaithful to his vows and does a wrong to his child, if he trains him in the practice of that which is unsuitable to a true disciple of Christ.

And now, in conclusion of this discussion, I say to those who plead for this vain and hurtful amusement, and who indulge in the practice of it, never appeal to the Bible as sanctioning it. Be candid enough to others and honest enough toward yourselves, to acknowledge that there is no word of God that countenances your sinful pleasures. When you cross the threshold of the ball-room, remember that you cannot take with you the protection of God's promises, for you will have gone out of the path prescribed in his precepts. If an upbraiding conscience disquiets your heart, amidst the hilarity around you, and you would fain take shelter from its chidings, under the cover of the words, there is "a time to dance," remember that such a perverted use of Scripture will only prove a refuge of lies. Forget not also to recall these other words here written, "a time to mourn," and "a time to die." Yes, take this thought with you to the ball-room and dancing-party, *There is a time to die!* When, where, how, no one can tell. Perchance Death may become your partner in the dance, and your ball dress be your shroud. Such things have been. There have

been gay youth who have danced away their precious lives, and their immortal souls have sped into the presence of God while as yet the sound of the viol had scarce died on their ears. Ah! there is a time to die, and God has set that time. You need not dance, you must die. You can excuse yourself from the scene of mirthful revelry, but not from the bed of death. You can easily stay away from the ball-room, when your companions invite, but not from the chamber of death, when called by the voice of God. And if that call should find you, unprepared, alas! how sad the change! How truly must your dancing be turned into mourning. But if you love the world—the things of the world—the vain, fleeting, deceitful pleasures of the world, surely, you cannot flatter yourself with the thought that you are prepared to die! Prepared to die.

"Preposterous fool * * *
Think'st thou that mirth and vain delights,
High feed, and shadow-short'ning nights,
Soft knees, full bags, and beds of down,
Are proper prologues to a crown?
Or canst thou hope to come and view,
Like prosperous Cæsar, and subdue?
* * * Ah! fool, beware,
The safest road's not always even;
The way to Hell's a seeming Heaven."

The round of gaiety and pleasure you and thousands of others are pursuing, leaves little time for preparation to die. To talk of the last party, to recover from the lassitude and ennui it has produced, and to get ready for the next, leave no place nor disposition for serious thought or earnest inquiry into the soul's state. Balls and routs suit ill with prayer. And without prayer can any think to be prepared for death and judgment?

"That day, that day, whose all-discerning light
Ransacks the secret dens of night,
And severs good from bad; true joys from false delight.
How will your eyes endure this day?
Hills will be deaf, and mountains will not hear;
There be no caves, nor corners there,
To shade your souls from fire, to shield your hearts from fear."

In particular, I address myself to the members of the Presbyterian church. Whatever the opinions or practices of particular men may have been, that church in her purest days, and throughout this land, now, in theory at least, has pronounced fashionable dancing a dangerous and hardening practice, fascinating and infatuating to immortal souls.* In a large portion of the church it is looked upon as unfitting the person for the communion table. How long, think you, would the purity, the piety, and the influence of the church for saving souls, survive the general practice of this pastime by her members? Ah! if Presbyterian members revel in the dance, and Presbyterian Elders give dancing parties, and Presbyterian Pastors look on with smiles of approval, the disciples of Paine, the Pope, and the Devil may surely laugh in derisive triumph, for ICHABOD—The glory is departed—must soon be written upon all our holy and beautiful palaces. Better, far better, for us and a perishing world, to have a little band of praying, faithful, self-crucified Christians, than a whole nation of worldly-minded, pleasure-loving, dancing professors.

AND "now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you, faultless, before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

* Pastoral Letter of the General Assembly, A. D., 1818

No. 173.

HINTS
TO
CHRISTIANS ON A JOURNEY.

At certain seasons of the year it is the custom of many Christians to leave their homes for a journey, and to sojourn for a time in other places. For weeks and months many families and individuals are absent from the places of their ordinary residence, and from the sanctuaries of their accustomed worship, in search of health or recreation, for the purpose of visiting relatives and friends, or in the prosecution of business interests. Some remove to the places of their customary resort in different parts of their own State, perhaps blessed by a wise and beneficent Creator with a variety of scenery and of climate, and affording the means of health and of pleasure to all varieties of constitution, and peculiarities of physical necessity. Some extend their journeyings farther, and spend months with kindred and friends who live far distant from their habitations, or visit the crowded cities and beautiful villages, the mountains, the lakes, and the waterfalls, with which the hand of God hath so wonderfully studded and adorned this great and goodly land. While others even cross the mighty ocean, and revisit the scenes of their own or their ancestors' birth and childhood, become acquainted with other nations, and increase their stores of useful knowledge by observation of the manners, customs, genius and condition of different great divisions of the mighty family of man. Thus many become sojourners for a time in other places, subject to the vicissitudes, enjoying the pleasures, exposed to the temptations, and favoured with

the privileges and opportunities, which belong to the lot of the traveller. Their dwellings are closed—their seats in the sanctuary are vacant—they do not meet in the familiar scenes of home—their voices do not mingle in the songs of the Sabbath. It seems appropriate to address to such a few words of respectful and affectionate counsel, as to their duties, responsibilities, and temptations, to aid them to exemplify the character of the Christian Traveller, and thus to enjoy "a prosperous journey by the will of God."

Permit us, then, dear Christian friends, in the first place, to remind you, that, wherever you go, you cannot escape from the presence and the oversight of God.

The great general truth of the omnipresence of the Deity, cannot be more graphically or forcibly expressed than in the familiar language of the Psalmist: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me—even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." (Psalm cxxxix. 7—12.) Yet, though this truth is one which all who believe in God most readily acknowledge, there is scarcely one of which they are more habitually and practically neglectful. Who of us feels the important weight of this great truth, daily and hourly pressing upon him: "*Thou, God, seest me?*" Who of us realizes constantly, that wherever we are and whatever we do, at home or abroad, in the sunshine or the midnight, in the busy crowd or in our secret retirement, the eye of the omnipresent God is on us, and that all things around and within us are naked and open to his sight? Oh, if this great truth were ever

before us, if we felt it always as a burden on our souls, the history of our lives would not contain so many pages wet with the tears of the recording angels.

But if, amid the familiar scenes and regular monotony of home life, we are apt to be forgetful of God's presence, the liability to such forgetfulness is increased by the pre-occupation of the mind with the change, excitement and incident attendant on travel. Where all is new, attractive and engrossing, the mind does not so readily retain old and familiar truths; the haste, the excitement, and the constant variety keep us on the stretch, and are unfavourable to the contemplation of that which is abstract and invisible. To withdraw the mind from the many and varied objects of sense which appeal to the outward eye, and many of which present themselves in aspects of grandeur or robes of beauty, and commune with those great truths which appeal to the eye of faith, and are recognized only by the vision of the soul, requires an effort, to make which the traveller is not placed in favourable circumstances, and which he is too prone to neglect.

But there are several aspects and relations of this duty which we desire more particularly to commend to him who seeks "a prosperous journey." A sense of the presence and superintending providence of God should be cultivated by the traveller, because he is often placed in circumstances which make such an assurance of great practical value to him.

The exposure and risks of the traveller are peculiar and great. Though at all times and in all places there is but a step between us and death, yet in his case the step seems one most easily taken. By land or sea he is exposed to casualty or mischance. If he travels on the iron track, he knows not but that some fearful collision may endanger his limbs or life. If he be on the bosom of the river, he knows not but that the overtasked machinery may give way, or the mighty agent which propels him may burst its bonds, and

pour death and destruction all around. And in these days of appalling recklessness on the part of those who have the control of the various methods of conveyance, no traveller can consider himself as safe. He takes his life in his hands when he enters a car or a steamboat; and if he is to cross the ocean, he is exposed to all the perils of the great deep—and what they are, who can describe? How important, then, to that peace and satisfaction of mind which is essential to a prosperous journey, is a sense of God's presence and of his overruling providence! In those scenes and circumstances to which every traveller is exposed, when he feels his weakness and dependence most keenly, when thoughts of his own danger mingle fearfully with the remembrances of the dear ones he has left behind him—and all conspire to make him solicitous and disquieted, then, to be able to feel that God is with him, that he can control the elements and ride upon the storm; that his providence protects and guides through all the dangers of the way, and that all events are ordered by his infinite wisdom and boundless love; oh, this is a most invaluable source of serenity and courage to the traveller; this heightens his enjoyment of his journey, or sustains him in situations of peril.

The Christian traveller alone can enjoy this most desirable state of mind, for to him alone does faith present his God and Father ever near, to order all circumstances and events for his best good. If his journey is prosperous, the thought of the agency of God's providence in that prosperity, only increases his enjoyment; while, if it is adverse, he has, in the reflection that it is ordered by infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness, a solace and support which enable him to bear the disappointment with composure and with a cheerful contentment. Oh, then, as you go from your homes to journey on your various errands of business, of pleasure, or of health, as you sub-

mit yourselves to the direction and the power of those who manage and control the various modes of conveyance, take with you a deep sense of the presence of God, and an humble faith in his wise and overruling Providence. You go out in a manner as the ancient patriarch did, not knowing whither he went. You have in your mind's eye the destination and end of your journey, but you know not that you will reach it; you know not what hindrances, what unforeseen accidents, what scenes of danger and distress, may lie in your path. You know not how prosperous your journey will be. Let it be begun, continued and ended, with humble faith in God and his Providence, then "thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Psalm xci. 5, 6, 11, 12.)

But the exposure to danger to which the traveller is subjected, is not the only reason why he should cultivate a sense of the presence of God. This duty is also urged from his exposure to temptation.

How difficult a thing is it, under the most favourable circumstances, to resist our natural propensities to evil, and to maintain "a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man!" Amid the quiet of our own homes and firesides, where we are able to preserve our regular habits and hours of devotion; where the things around are not of a specially exciting or distracting character, where we have the benefit of the regular seasons of public worship, and the ministrations of the sanctuary, we find it no easy thing to resist temptation, and be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." There is still enough of remaining corruption in us, enough of the leaven

of our native depravity to give us frequent and serious trouble, and to demand the exercise of constant vigilance and prayerfulness, lest we be overcome by temptation and led into grievous sin. But our exposure is far greater when we are removed from the quiet scenes, and restraining influences of home, of uniform occupation, and regular habits of devotion and religious privilege. The hurry, and excitement of travel, the frequent changes of scene and circumstances, and place; the breaking in upon regular hours of prayer and meditation, are all very unfavourable to the cultivation of piety, and the uniform symmetry and consistency of the christian character.

The christian is in danger of slighting or neglecting his devotional habits when on a journey, and his peril from this source is peculiar. He is away from his home—he is often in the midst of a crowd—he is travelling at all hours of the day or night, and the inconvenience and sometimes the actual impossibility of anything like retirement for private prayer, is very unfavourable to the spirit of devotion, and insensibly leads to its neglect. But remember that God is as near you in the car, or the steamer, or the crowded hotel, as he is in your own quiet home, or in your closet. He can hear your petitions though unexpressed in words, wherever you are, and send you answers of peace and of love. Be careful how you neglect to call daily upon him for daily protection and counsel—for a prayerless journey cannot be a "prosperous journey" for a christian.

The christian on a journey is in danger of violating the Sabbath, and of neglecting the sanctuary. He is often tempted to travel on that day to save time or distance, or for the sake of continuing with agreeable company, or to reach some favourite stopping place. There seems to be a great weakening of the sense of responsibility on this subject among those who journey, especially if they go far from home. The elasticity of their consciences is in proportion

to the distance from the scenes of its ordinary exercise. Individuals who would not dream of violating the law of the Sabbath at home—who are regular and consistent in their observance of the day, will allow very trifling causes to interfere with its observance when they are abroad. They will pursue their journey through the Sabbath or a part of it, they will spend it in sight-seeing, or pleasure, or rest from the fatigues of the road. They will, perhaps, attend public worship, where they will not hear the gospel, but where splendid music, fine paintings, and an imposing ritual may please the senses, and minister to the imagination, and gratify the fancy, while the soul is left without instruction, and without profit. Such temptations often assail the traveller, and are apt to seduce him from the plain path of duty. A sense of the constant presence of God, and of our solemn responsibility to him should be sedulously cultivated as a most important safeguard. Remember that wherever you go, the vows of a christian are on you. It is just as much your duty to honour the Sabbath and the house of God abroad as at home, and a Sabbath-breaking journey cannot be a "prosperous journey" to a christian.

The traveller is also exposed to temptation to visit scenes and places of amusement, which are inconsistent with a christian profession. Especially is this true of those who are in the habit of spending much time in large cities. Here there is everything to attract and tempt the sojourner to inexpedient and sinful indulgence. It is unquestionably true that the various places of public amusement in large cities are supported mainly by the lower grades of the resident population, and by strangers. The orderly, respectable and pious, such as many of those who travel class themselves with at home, are not the frequenters and supporters of the theatres, and places of that character. If the patronage of the travelling public were withdrawn from

them, they could not be sustained. Now many christians and sober people reason in this way in respect to occasional indulgence in this kind of amusement, when abroad. "I am among strangers—my influence cannot be injurious where I am not known—I am not conscious of any personal injury from attending the theatres or the ball room—I enjoy the crowd, the acting, the music, the scenery, and I enjoy it innocently, and while I would not for example sake, sustain such places at home, yet where I am unknown, and no one can be injured by my example, I see not that there is any impropriety in my occasional indulgence." Surely such unsound reasoning can hardly satisfy the consciences of those who adopt it. The vows of a christian to abandon the world and the things of the world are made without any reservation, express or implied, and they are equally binding at all times, and in all places. The fact that nobody knows that you are a christian or a christian minister, cannot make it right for you to do anywhere what is acknowledged to be inconsistent with the christian character. Grant that you are offending nobody by so doing. You may be offending God, and wounding your Saviour, and giving strength to the unhallowed propensities of your own sinful nature, and, therefore, you have no more right to do these things in New York, or London, or Paris, than at home. And, furthermore, you can never be certain that you are not in danger of injuring others. Wherever you go, you may be possibly thrown among those who know you, and know that you are a professed christian, and they may be injured by your example while you know it not. There is no margin left in your christian vows for occasional indulgences in those things which you *generally* reprobate. No matter where a christian is, in that very place it is his solemn duty to glorify God, by a consistent walk and conversation, and "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present

world." (Titus ii. 12.) His religion is not to be a thing merely for home consumption; it is to go abroad with him, and be the grand regulating and controlling principle of his life, wherever in the providence of God he may be called to sojourn.

But there is another aspect in which this subject may be viewed, which deserves the serious consideration of every christian traveller. The church of Christ is one—one in faith, in purpose, in spirit. The great object of real christians everywhere, is the advancement of holiness, and the defeat of sin. In every place the church of Christ has great obstacles in its way, and foes against which it must always contend. Christians in large cities have these obstacles in great numbers and power, and their work is proportionably arduous and often disheartening. The theatre, the ball-room, the saloon, the various places of folly, dissipation and vice with which every large city abounds, are the great foes of the church, and of the cause of piety and virtue in the community. Here their sons and daughters are exposed to the worst influences; here the fascinating allurements of vice are presented to their young men, by which thousands are lured from the path of integrity, virtue, and peace, and in their fall bring desolation and woe to many loving and bleeding hearts. Now the church and the christians in every such place have a right to ask and expect, that their fellow christians who sojourn among them for a season, will sympathize with them in their great work, and their peculiar trials. They have a right to expect that their fellow christians, though they are strangers and tarry but for a time, will throw all the weight of their influence into the scale of morality and piety, and thus strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of God's people, and not assist in sustaining those institutions which are a source of evil and destruction to thousands of souls. You may tarry for a season in a great city where you know

not a single individual—you may frequent the places of public amusement, and think that you have done no harm, but you have so far contributed to the support of places and institutions which are opposed to the best interests of the place where you are tarrying—against which thousands of your fellow christians are praying and labouring; places where many a fine young man, the son of a godly father, or a praying mother, has been enticed away from all that is pure and lovely and of good report, and irrecoverably lost to virtue. And does no responsibility attach to you, for your temporary support of places which are doing their destructive work daily and nightly in every city in our land? Have you not contributed to sustain them in their mission of corruption and death? You may not have been injured consciously, but have you not lent your countenance and support to institutions whose influence, as a whole, is acknowledged by all the wise and good to be of a most disastrous character? Surely this is inconsistent with the obligations of the christian, which bind him in all places and under all circumstances to devote his entire influence to the promotion of the glory of God, and the highest welfare of his fellow men.

These temptations will assail many as they travel on their customary tours in search of health or recreation. To resist them may sometimes require a resolute and determined effort. The great adversary of souls will not remain behind you when you leave your homes. He will attend you in your journeyings, and by his seductive arts will often seek to draw you aside from the path of christian integrity. If he cannot succeed at home, he will be well pleased to lead you into inconsistencies and sins abroad. But if you will fortify your minds by a constant sense of the presence of God, and of your responsibilities to him—if you will daily look to him in prayer for strength and wisdom so to direct you that you may "have a prosperous journey by

the will of God"—if you will bear about with you a sense of your christian obligations, and cultivate a sincere interest in the spiritual welfare of every community, among whom the providence of God may call you to tarry, you will be able to resist these temptations and make your journey contribute not only to your bodily health and mental recreation, but to spiritual refreshment and growth in christian virtue.

The christian traveller will feel it to be his duty, and will find it his pleasure, to labour for God wherever he may find an opportunity. We are too apt to be mindful only of our own selfish enjoyment, and the promotion of our own comfort in our travels, and to forget that it is our duty to serve God and bless mankind wherever we go. The captive Jews were commanded by God to seek the peace of the city of their captivity, and to pray for its prosperity. Much more is it the duty of the christian to manifest his interest in the community where he may temporarily sojourn. Seed sown by the way-side by the hand of a passer by, has often sprung up and blossomed in his path, and many a hearty benediction has followed the stranger who became a messenger of God to some soul, with whom he was providentially brought into contact. The traveller is constantly thrown among strangers, often forms acquaintances of longer or shorter continuance, and has the opportunity of influencing many minds for good or for evil. In the interchange of the ordinary courtesies of life, he may be able with much propriety to drop some kind word of pious counsel, which may be productive of results which he will never know till the day when all things are revealed. And the christian traveller is the more bound to seek the welfare of those among whom he sojourns, because the irreligious traveller is exerting an irreligious influence wherever he goes. In more than one quiet and moral village, the return of the travelling season is dreaded by the sober and pious

portion of the community. In the great influx of strangers, who come at that time to spend a season of leisure and enjoyment in the country, comes the dissipation of the great city. The quiet of the Sabbath is disturbed, by revelling and riding for pleasure, by hunting and fishing, and sports of all kinds; the sober and rational habits of the citizens are broken in upon and deranged—examples are set before their children and youth of a most undesirable character, and the whole season is one of trial and grief to the better part of the villagers. But if amid the crowd there are christian visitors, who will respect their feelings and customs—who will regularly attend their religious services—who will look in upon their Sabbath schools, and encourage all good works—who will manifest some interest in their spiritual prosperity, and show that though strangers they are bound to them by the tie of brotherhood in Christ—such visitors are ever welcomed, and loved and remembered with respect and gratitude, when they have departed. Christians who thus remember their obligations and duties when abroad, cannot fail to enjoy "a prosperous journey by the will of God."

Christian friends, who contemplate leaving your homes during the season of travel, be persuaded to remember these hints and suggestions. Wherever you go, let a sense of God's presence and the superintendence of his providence go with you. Remember that his eye is upon you and takes note of all your actions. When you are tempted to do anything which is of a doubtful character or plainly inconsistent with the obligations of a christian profession—when you are solicited to mingle in scenes which are essentially worldly and corrupting, and which you would feel it your duty to avoid at home, resist the temptation, and violate not your consciences by a sinful compliance with the solicitation. Never travel on the Sabbath—never go to the post-office, or in any other way profane God's holy day.

Always attend upon the services of the sanctuary, and as a general rule, but in no narrow, sectarian spirit, worship with your brethren of your own faith and order. Be faithful to your closet duties, and do not neglect your Bibles. Lose no opportunity of doing good to others, which Providence may cast in your way. Cultivate as far as practicable the acquaintances of christians where you sojourn, and endeavour to promote the spiritual interests of the communities where you may find a temporary home. Thus, with your covenant God and Father to guide, watch over and defend you—with opportunities of beholding his works in their variety, their beauty, and their grandeur—of improving your health—of enlarging your sphere of observation, thought and mental cultivation—of increasing in knowledge and in usefulness, and of labouring for his glory and the good of others on an extended scale, you may confidently expect to enjoy "a prosperous journey by the will of God," and to return to your homes with a rich experience of his goodness and mercy.

In conclusion, remember that life itself is but a journey, and characterized by all a journey's uncertainty. You may go from the familiar scenes of home, but you may never return. When your friends bid you farewell, and wish you "a prosperous journey, by the will of God," they cannot forget that it may be a last farewell. The future is unknown to us. It may be that God's messenger will meet you by the way and call you to "arise and depart." What then? shall you never meet your friends again? Yes, if we are the people of God, such partings cannot be eternal. For "there remaineth yet a rest." It matters little to the christian when or where the Master sends for him. He may die far away from his accustomed earthly habitation, but he is just as near his heavenly home. His dearest earthly friends may not be with him, when he goes through the dark valley, but ONE will be by his side "that

sticketh closer than a brother." He may not behold again in the flesh the faces and forms of those he loves, but he shall be with Jesus, and wait to welcome them. Then go forth upon your several journeys with faith in a better home than that in which you are sojourning. For the day is coming when God will call all his children, their travel ended and their wanderings over, to their Father's house. Oh, may we all be so unspeakably blessed as to meet at last in that home

"Where sorrow turns to gladness, and parting is unknown."

In illustration of the providential and gracious dealings of God towards the traveller, and the fact that spiritual blessings may be enjoyed at a distance from home, and among strangers, by those who use the means appointed for this end, wherever they may be, the writer would relate the following incident.

Some years ago he was travelling through one of our Southern States, and on his tour he visited a noted watering-place, beautifully situated among the mountains, and at that time a place of much resort. The proprietor, General G——, to whom he supposed himself to be an entire stranger, a man of fine appearance, and highly respectable family, gave him a very cordial welcome, and appeared to be particularly glad to see him at his house. On the day after his arrival, his host invited him to a walk to several of the mineral springs with which the neighbourhood abounded, and coming at last to a sweet shaded spot, where a rustic seat beside a clear and sparkling stream invited them to rest, they sat down and engaged in a general conversation. After a few moments thus spent, General

G——, turning to the writer with great earnestness of manner, said that he regarded his visit to his place, as a special providence which he hoped would be greatly blessed to his spiritual welfare. He then went on to state that about a year before, while on a journey, he had stopped over the Sabbath in the city where the writer then resided, and had attended divine service in the church where he officiated. Said he, "I heard from you on that occasion a sermon which I have never forgotten. It was on the danger of grieving away the Holy Ghost. I felt all through the discourse that you were speaking to me, and describing my case, and that I was in danger of being for ever given up by God, and left to perish in my sins. That sermon followed me home, and I have thought of it ever since, and now I hope that God has brought you here to follow up the impression which was then so deeply made upon my mind." He went on to state that he had lately lost an affectionate wife, and that this event had only deepened his religious anxieties and impressions, and increased his desire to be instructed in the way of life. The reader may imagine the feelings of the writer, who thus unexpectedly found the seed which he had sown a twelvemonth before, springing up among the mountains, several hundred miles from the place of his ordinary labours, in the heart of a stranger. Most gladly and gratefully did he endeavour to direct his enquiring friend to the gracious Saviour. During a week's visit he had several opportunities of private conversation and prayer with General G——, and found that by the blessing of God, he gradually made progress in spiritual things, until he was able to hope that the Spirit had not only not given him up, but that he had been led to the cross of Christ, to find peace and joy in believing in

Jesus. Though nearly a thousand miles now stretch between them, he remembers that journey and its incidents with deep emotion, and hopes at last to meet his friend on the right hand of the Judge in the great day and continue in Eternity the friendship so strangely and unexpectedly begun in time.

THE GLORY OF WOMAN

IS THE

FEAR OF THE LORD.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—PROV. xxxi. 30.

No one thing, in social life, more distinguishes a Christian from a heathen country, than the consideration in which *females* are held, and the important and influential station which is assigned them in society. As the farther you depart from Christianity, the deeper is the degradation of females, and the more miserable and polluted the state of society; so, the nearer you approach to Christianity, and the purer its nature and the more efficient its influence, the higher is the perfection of female character, and the more virtuous and happy the community at large.

How great is the responsibility of females in Christian lands, to improve the blessings which God confers upon them through his holy word! Alas! there appears to be but a portion of them, who feel and endeavour to meet this responsibility. Many seem to vie with the heathen in vanity, and their influence is against the holy and purifying and life-giving religion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although they are cast by the hand of their Creator in a softer mould, and around their persons gather the strongest attractions, and the sweetest charities of life, yet have they had much to do in the ruin of our race. They, too, are

depraved, and by nature are children of wrath, even as others. And in setting out in life, they too, forget what is the chief end of man, and love the world, and serve the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. They wander far away from God, the fountain of living waters, and hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Jer. ii. 13. And we mourn over their sin and folly, and, in bitterness of spirit, see them go down to their graves without hope! They have mistaken the true glory and happiness of woman; they have persevered in impenitency; they have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and have done despite unto the Spirit of grace; and judgment and fiery indignation have overtaken them at last, and consumed them as the adversaries of the Lord! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x. 31. Oh! to think of their gentle frames holding such stout spirits of rebellion against the Lord, yea, against that condescending Redeemer, who humbled himself to be "*born of a woman*," and who, through all his weary and troublous life, showed them his special favour, and graciously received their ministrations of gratitude and love! Can the daughters of Eve lift up the heel against the "*Seed of the woman?*" Can they unite with the serpent, who beguiled them unto death, to bruise Him who comes to lay down his life for their redemption, on the cross? Nay, rather, will they not lift up their voices and weep, beholding the holy Sufferer there? Will they not come under the cross, with Mary his mother, and with Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene, and confess him before all his cruel enemies, and embrace him in his agony and death, as their Lord and their God?

Truth and candour oblige us to make a difference in our

judgment of the characters of the daughters of men, and in the praises which we bestow upon them. The word of God teaches us in the text, that, whatever women may possess, the true ground of the excellency of their character, or, in other words, the true glory of women, and that which they are to prefer before all things else, and which forms the just foundation of their praise, is—*the fear of the Lord.* Let us pursue the text in the divisions of it, now indicated.

And FIRST: *The glory of woman is the fear of the Lord.*

"The fear of the Lord" is "the beginning"—the excellency—the chief part "of wisdom." It is but another expression for *true piety.* Solomon thus speaks its praise: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her." Prov. iii. 13–18.

The woman that feareth the Lord has, through grace, been brought to a true sight and sense of her sins: she has repented and sought forgiveness and salvation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. God hath shed abroad his love in her heart, and she has experienced joy and peace in believing. She has approached the Saviour in humility, and bowed down and washed his feet with the tears of her sincere contrition, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. To her Jesus has said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee—go in peace." She hath seated herself with Mary at his feet, to be taught and led, and to be sanctified and saved by

him. She has sacrificed her beauty and favour, her talents and family, her station and wealth, and all that she possesses, *to the Lord.* Hear the language of this new-born soul: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Psa. lxxiii. 24–26. She "hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." Luke x. 38–42.

You perceive that the work with her is *inward.* She hath been truly "called of God." She hath been "born again—born of the Spirit." She is "the child"—the "daughter" of the Lord.

Many women—some in the morning of life—hurry forward to a *profession* of religion. That profession they know to be reputable. They are told that piety adorns the female character and renders it attractive, and that it is a passport to favour and honour and prosperity, and they seek a profession of religion as a kind of recommendation, or as a happy finish to their other accomplishments. It is viewed as an important something, which the opinions of society have made an indispensable requisite in female character. True, in making a profession, which is a most solemn and responsible act, their conscience may be awakened. They may feel something of duty to God: something of the duty to repent and believe. Reading or hearing the word, they may do many things, and do them gladly: they may lay great restraints upon themselves, and make what they and others consider great sacrifices for religion's sake; yet what is the conclusion of the whole matter? *They are not truly converted!* They have been looking upon religion as a mere worldly affair, calculated to advance their worldly standing.

and prosperity. God and his glory have not been in all their thoughts. However, they have *professed* his name. They are lifted up with pride and self-approbation. They think they have done something that renders them worthy and amiable. They are—added to all their other good things—members of the church. Miserable delusion! It is all a *profession!* They are still what they ever were! How soon do these females manifest that the love of God and of Christ is not in them! Do you ask in what manner? Judge for yourselves. Behold the vanity and frivolity of their lives. Behold how they "mind earthly things." Behold their weak and sinful compliances with the foolish, hurtful and trifling fashions, and amusements, and customs of the world: their profanation of the Sabbath day, and contempt of the house of God and the solemn services of it: their disregard of parental authority, and sometimes open rebellion against it: their indifference to the opinions of the wise and the good, and avoidance of their society and observation: their neglect of their Bibles and of secret prayer: their ill-tempers to their superiors, inferiors and equals: their disposition to ridicule persons and things, sacred and good: their pride, love of dress and show: their idleness: their tattling and slander, "speaking things which they ought not," and things of which it is "a shame to speak" at all: their cherished malice, revenge, covetousness, and many other secret and sinful ways! Are *these* "the fruits of the Spirit?" Unstable souls! Deceitful workers! The apostle characterizes you as "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God:" "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:" "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 1 Tim. v. 13; 2 Tim. iii. 4-7.

Such profession, so vain and shallow, must not be confounded with that fear of the Lord which is the glory of

woman. A difference must be made between women *professing*, and women *possessing* godliness.

The work of the woman that feareth the Lord is not *inward* only, but it exhibits itself *in her life*. Her fruit is unto holiness. Your observation will convince you that she "walks with God," daily: that religion is her comfort, her refuge, her strength, and her delight and happiness.

She giveth herself conscientiously to the *duty and the privilege of secret prayer*. Morning and evening and at other times, she retires to her closet, and having shut to her door, she humbly kneels and prays to her heavenly Father, "which seeth in secret."

She giveth herself conscientiously to the *reading and study of God's holy word*. Sweeter than honey to her taste is that word. In all times and seasons that pass over her, she seeks therein for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that she may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. She venerates that holy book, and makes it, above all the customs and opinions of the world, the man of her counsel, and her rule of duty.

She giveth herself to *sobriety and watchfulness*. She adorns herself in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered, or plaited hair, or with gold, or pearls, or costly array. She pleases best, and is best pleased in herself, with Christian simplicity and neatness of dress: for her adorning is that of the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 1 Tim. ii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Her manners are not rude, nor wild, nor boisterous. Her voice is not heard afar off, but in all her conduct, and in her personal manners, she studies dignity, modesty and propriety.

She giveth herself to the *faithful observance of the holy*

Sabbath. She doth not absent herself on vain pretences from the public worship of God in any portion of the day. Neither doth she misspend any of its precious moments in prolonged sleep and in idleness, nor in visits of friendship or ceremony, nor in dinner, nor in evening parties or entertainments, nor in parties going abroad for recreation and pleasure. Nor doth she misspend its precious moments in frivolous worldly conversation, nor in reading improper books and papers, nor in writing letters, either of convenience, or of ordinary business, or of mere friendship, nor in unnecessary worldly employments and domestic avocations. If she be the head of the household, she commands her children and all under her authority to keep the way of the Lord, and to observe the holy Sabbath sacredly and throughout all its hours; for she calleth the Sabbath "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable:" and on that day she doth delight herself in the Lord. Isa. lviii. 13, 14; Ex. xx. 8–11.

She giveth herself to the *services of the house of God.* She feels it to be her duty and her privilege to be present in his sanctuary, and at all the ordinances of his house, and nothing but actual and unavoidable necessity detains her at home, or any of those who are subject to her control. She inwardly delights in the worship of her God and Saviour. Her worship is spiritual and sincere. She keepeth silence in God's holy temple; her behaviour evinces quietude, sobriety and reverence. She unites in the prayers and praises of Zion with the spirit, and listens to the voice of the preacher as to the voice of the messenger of God, and applies the truth to her own soul, and feeds by faith upon the provisions of his house. Her fellowship, with the disciples of her Saviour, is that of love without dissimulation, and she returns in peace to bless her own family and household.

She giveth herself to *love the brethren and the ministers of God.* She has been taught by the Spirit of God to love the brethren, yea, out of a pure heart, fervently, and without respect of persons. That love reveals itself in an expression of sincere good will towards them; in acts of kindness, performed in public and in private, according to her opportunity and ability, and their necessities. It reveals itself in a tender regard for the purity of their characters; the preservation of their good name; the promotion of their peace, and that of their families, and the advancement of their interests, both temporal and spiritual. She knows what a delicate thing is the reputation of God's ministers, and how much their success in their work, and the honour of religion, depend upon their being "of good report" with all men; she is therefore watchful against a spirit of criticism and of fault-finding, uncharitableness, and detraction. She upholds them by her friendship, her prayers, her godly example; and it is her pleasure to give them hospitable entertainment in her own home, and to receive the benefit to her family of their conversation, example and prayers.

She giveth herself to *good works.* These are her "adornment;" the adornment "which becometh women professing godliness." Not content to receive the grace of salvation in her own soul, moved by gratitude and love, she would help forward that work with all mankind. Willing to communicate, ready to distribute, she giveth of her labour and of her substance for the support and furtherance of the gospel at home and abroad, and for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, and useful publications. Looking not upon her own things, but also on the things of others, and being ready to every good word and work, she takes an active part in prayer meetings, in benevolent societies, and especially in Sabbath schools. Faithfully and prayerfully she watches over the

children and youth committed to her charge, and God crowns her instrumentality with his blessing. She rejoices over converted souls, and will rejoice in that day of final account. She follows the footsteps of the Divine Redeemer, who went about doing good.

She giveth herself faithfully to the *duties of her family and household.* Here is her peculiar, her delightful, yet responsible field of labour, assigned her by the Lord. If she be an *unmarried* woman, then she fulfils in the family the duties of an affectionate, respectful and obedient daughter. Confiding in her parents as her best friends, she taketh no steps, formeth no friendships, receiveth no attentions, contracteth no engagements, without their advice and hearty concurrence. Fearful of inflicting a wound and a disgrace upon them; of disappointing all their fond expectations, and perhaps bringing down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; it is her prayer, her effort and her happiness, that she may be their comfort and their joy. As a sister, she is kind and tender; neither overbearing nor exacting, envious nor jealous, but cheerful, agreeable and useful, and thus quietly and efficiently commending her piety to the praise of all.

If she be a *married* woman, and bear the sacred and tender name and relations of a wife, then doth she love her husband, and do him good, and not evil, all the days of his life. "Who can find a virtuous woman?" saith Solomon. She is the woman that feareth the Lord, and "her price is above rubies." "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." How beautiful is the expression, and how true! "*The heart* of her husband." He has found a home for his affections, a bosom unfailingly faithful and true, to which he can always come, and upon which he can rest with the most perfect confidence, and with the sweetest peace, and the

calmest repose. His love is all her own. He trusts in her, and that safely: "so that he shall have no need of spoil," that is, of *riches*. She is all the world to him: his chief treasure, and more to him than all riches. She is ever with him, and all that he hath is hers. By her prudence, and industry, and frugality, she will make riches for him. Her soul is bound up with his. His interests, his character, his reputation, are her own. Though he meet with reverses in fortune, with evil from the evil men of this evil world; though he suffer in character; though the beauty and vigour of youth be gone, and he decline in years, or fall a prey to lingering disease, and be laid upon a bed of affliction and pain, yet she will never leave nor forsake him, but endure and suffer with him, and be a ministering spirit of life and of love around him and to him. She reverences her husband in her family, and supports his authority and influence there; and submits to him in the Lord, without peevishness, contention or discontent; and endeavours as a duty, in all her married life, by domestic virtues and graces, to make his own home, and her own person and society, the most attractive to him of any in the world. "By chaste conversation coupled with fear," she wins him over unto the Lord, "if he obey not the word:" and if converted, then it is her joy to see his "soul prosper," and to walk with him "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless."

And her *children!* Oh, who may speak the love, the tenderness, the unceasing cares, and the unwearied labours of a Christian mother! There is no eye like a mother's eye. There is no ear, no heart, no hand, like hers. These children "are an heritage of the Lord." They are "his reward." They are her "olive plants round about her table." She is grateful for them, and happy in them. To God hath she dedicated them. In his nurture and admonition doth she

bring them up: and for them she seeks first "the kingdom of God and his righteousness." She teaches their little tongues to lisp, "Our Father, which art in heaven." She prays with and for them, and unites with her husband in praying with and for them, and in every effort for their religious instruction and salvation. She leaves them not to the care of servants, or of any other persons, to the exposure of their health to injury, or of their characters to corruption and vice. She is choice in their associations, and brings them up to a strict observance of the Sabbath, the reading of God's holy word, and to secret prayer. Her soul travails in birth for them until Christ be formed in them the hope of glory. No cares, no privations, no self-denials are too great for her to endure for their good. She doth not weakly indulge them to their ruin, but imbueth them with principles of modesty, virtue, truth, temperance, justice, honesty and patriotism. She shapeth their manners and habits to gentility, neatness and order; giveth a spur to their industry, energy, and charity; storeth their minds with knowledge by the best education which she is able to command for them; and buildeth them up in noble, generous and elevating sentiments, and thus she fitteth them for time and for eternity.

If she be a *step-mother*, and have *step-children*, she will consider them a solemn trust which she has voluntarily assumed. She has entered into the place in the family, and into the labours, and comforts, and possessions of their own mother; and she will be a mother to them. She will make no painful distinctions between her own children and the children of her husband's former wife; she will not look upon them with an evil eye, and oppress and cruelly treat them; nor will she breathe upon them with the cold breath of neglect, and envy and jealousy, meanly mortifying them,

and rejoicing in all the evil she sees in them, or in the sorrows, and disappointments, and neglects which they are called to endure. Nor will she strive, with the subtlety and maliciousness of the evil one, to poison the mind of their own father against them, and wean his affections from them, and so make them strangers, and worse than strangers, in their own father's house. Nor will she covet the property they have, nor try to dispossess them of it for the benefit of herself and the children of her own body. She remembers that they are motherless ones; that her children may one day be as they are; and that with God is her account.

If she be a *widow*, and hath passed through the agony and desolation of that hour when God took away the stay of her heart and the delight of her eyes, she "trusteth in God." He is her refuge and her portion, and she continueth in supplications and in prayers, night and day, and so liveth unto the Lord.

Is she a *mistress?* Then hath she "a Master in heaven." Her servants are immortal beings, like herself, and are hastening to death, judgment, and eternity. Their spiritual, as well as temporal, good demands her earnest regard. She doth not teach nor require them to falsify in her service, or for her sake; nor doth she encourage them to bear the news of the neighborhood to her ears, and so become spies and impudent tale-bearers and secret mischief-makers. She is not above the duty and the pains, according to her ability and opportunity, of instructing them in the way of life. She encourages her husband in his efforts to do them good. And should he not be a professor of religion, or should he be one criminally negligent of his duty, she will still feel it her duty to promote their comfort, morality and religion. She will not, like many, sit down in the enjoyment of every comfort of life, and never give herself the least concern to

know the condition and wants of those through whose instrumentality her comforts are prepared or do really come, and have no more feeling for them, and take no more interest in them, than if they dwelt on the other side the flood!

Her life, in her family, is marked with *industry*. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." She is "a keeper at home;" and within her own doors, is the evidence of her ceaseless activity. Time is precious. "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household." She is energetic. "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." She is not *above* work, but worketh willingly. "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." She expendeth her skill, and industry, and perseverance upon things not curious, showy, and frivolous, but upon things useful and durable. When her husband goes abroad, he bears about him in his dress and appearance, the marks and evidences of the love and care of a wife that feareth the Lord. "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." For her sake he will be honoured and honourable. For *her sake*, though *he* may not be worthy of it, his friends and neighbours will respect and assist him.

She is *provident*. She looks forward and keeps an eye upon the future as well as upon the present wants of her household. She lays up in store against the season of coming necessity—against the heat of summer and the cold of winter. "She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with double garments." She wastes not the provisions of her house, nor the resources of her family. She involves not her husband, nor herself, in debts and embarrassments, by expensive entertainments,

and by aspiring after associations and a style of living beyond their standing and their means, through pride and ostentation. She assumes no obligations, and opens no accounts which she cannot surely meet, for she is honest, and will owe no man any thing, but to love one another. Her providence and economy end in prosperity, for "she considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."

She is *prudent and kind.* Her speech, in her family, is cheerful, yet seasoned with gravity and the salt of grace. She backbiteth not with her tongue, nor receiveth, nor endureth, nor taketh up a reproach against her neighbour. She goeth not from house to house, a busy-body in other men's matters. Her loins are girt about with truth: she neither maketh a lie, nor uttereth the lies of others. She giveth no advice to others, nor doth she countenance that in them, which might involve her and her family in painful collision with neighbours who dwell securely and peacefully by her. She will brave evil for truth and righteousness' sake, yet will she not readily become a party in other men's quarrels. She heareth both sides, and acteth the part of a peace-maker, for she hateth strife and letteth it alone ere it be meddled with. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

And she crowns her household by making it one of *charity.* In her, the poor and the distressed find a ready and sympathizing friend. She feeds the hungry and clothes the naked, and visits the sick and those in prison, and ministers unto them: yea, it matters not if they be the evil and unthankful; it matters not if men be her enemies, she will forgive and do them good. None who know her fear to venture on her goodness. The Master hath said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive:" and she feels it to be so in

her very heart. "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

Here, then, is plainly set before you, "the woman that feareth the Lord." The faith wrought in her by the Holy Ghost purifies her heart and enables her to overcome the world. Whatever there is of beauty, of excellency and of loveliness in female character, dwelleth rightly in her; she possesses that which is emphatically the true glory of woman. And this is the first part of the text. We proceed to the

SECOND division: namely, that this fear of the Lord is to be preferred before all things else.

The hearts of women are set in them, naturally, to covet beauty, and riches, and talents, accomplishments, and the favour of men.

Beauty hath its attractions and its influence. When it is bestowed, it is the gift of God; for we made not ourselves. It is he who causeth us to differ one from another. Nor is this gift to be despised; it is to be used to God's glory. But it is not to be coveted for its own sake, nor gloried and trusted in as a possession and a portion. What saith the text? "Favour," that is, gracefulness, or beauty itself, "is deceitful:" for the words "favour" and "beauty," in the text, mean the same thing. She who prides herself upon the possession of beauty, and trusts in it as a portion, *is deceived.* Beauty promises more than it ever performs. A woman is led to expect from it, more than she ever realizes. She is blinded and deceived by it, and drawn into many sins and follies.

It lays the foundation for *pride* and *haughtiness.* She carries herself above others, less favoured, and for her presumptuous airs she receives their hatred in return. She is filled with *vanity*, and her simple displays meet with contempt. She becomes *jealous* and *suspicious.* Trifles discom-

pose her. She cannot bear neglect; she cannot endure a rival. She loses good friends and makes bitter enemies To cherish her beauty and add to the fascination of her charms, and the extent of her reputation, she devotes herself to dress and show, and to company and great assemblages, and her habits incline to dissipation and extravagance, and a foundation is laid for additional traits in her character of *covetousness* and *selfishness*. Carried away with self-conceit, and the admiration and flatteries of men, she wastes her precious time in the care and adornment of her person, to the neglect of the cultivation and improvement of her mind, and too frequently degenerates into a beauty without intelligence, vapid and tasteless: a flower bereft of its fragrance, to be delicately plucked and cherished, but after a little time, carelessly, if not rudely, cast away!

Beauty deceives and sometimes *lures to ruin!* It lays a vain and giddy creature open to the attentions and flatteries of specious, designing and unprincipled men. Her head is turned: she is spell-bound—infatuated! She resists all influences to the contrary, powerful and affecting as they may be, and she bestows her affections and her person upon a man, the most unworthy of men:—or, it may be, she makes shipwreck of character and standing for ever!

Beauty is not only "deceitful," but it is "*vain*." It is empty. It cannot be depended upon, for it soon decays, and the fashion of it passes away for ever!

Does the beauty depend upon the smiles, the caresses, and attentions of men? Her beauty grows old and commonplace. It wanes in its freshness and brightness, and they turn to some newer and brighter one. Does she depend upon the warm attentions and fervid devotion of the man who has made her his companion for life for her beauty's sake? The charm vanishes on possession, and love having

no better foundation, is but a mere passion; like a flame kindled with stubble, it rapidly burns out, and disappointment and misery usurp its place.

Yea, how vain, how empty is it! A single fit of sickness despoils it of its glory. And sickness too, induced, perhaps, by fashionable modes of dress, and by most imprudent exposures, conceived to be necessary, by those who would live fashionably; and so, the heedless female sacrifices herself, upon her own altar. Age certainly, either with slow or rapid progress, takes away the rose from the cheek, and furrows the face with wrinkles. The brilliant complexion fades; the sparkling eye grows dim; the pearly teeth decay; the glossy hair is frosted; the fine figure loses its round and perfect proportions:—the days of youth and beauty are over and gone! Presently comes ghastly death. The frail "tabernacle" shrinks into paleness, leanness and corruption, and we are obliged to bury our dead out of our sight. We consign the body, once so beautiful and so attractive, to the dark, damp and lonely grave: "for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." How deceitful and how vain a portion is this!

And what will it avail in the day of judgment? How strange the infatuation! How extraordinary the idolatry! That an immortal being should make a god of its own frail face and earthly tabernacle of flesh and blood, and fall down and worship and serve itself, "the creature, more than the Creator, who is over all blessed for ever!" "Idolaters—shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Rev. xxi. 8.

The hearts of women are set in them to covet *riches*. If they are born to riches, they look to them to cover over defects in personal charms, and in education, and in talents and in standing. Their possession, in their opinion, entitles

them to consideration, and to elevated and flattering connections in society. If they are not born to riches, they desire them, as in themselves capable of gratifying every want, of commanding every attention, of subduing enemies, creating friends, affording comfortable establishments, and supplying them with all the conveniences and elegancies and luxuries of life. They will be independent of the world, and say, We will take our ease, eat, drink and be merry. Such are the fancies that fill their minds. But God warns us of "the deceitfulness of riches." They yield not what they promise, nor what we fondly and confidently anticipate from them. When possessed, they bring cares and troubles to protect, to preserve, to manage and to improve them: and they give rise to fears and anxieties lest we be deprived of them and sink into poverty. They tend to foster pride, hardness of heart, selfishness, worldly-mindedness and forgetfulness of God. In themselves they cannot confer happiness. Our true happiness depends not so much upon our outward circumstances, as upon the inward state of the soul. The diamond may glitter upon a bosom swelling with disappointment and grief. Misery may recline in the palaces of kings.

But what will you say, should the wealthy woman become an object of speculation, and be affianced to a man that seeks not her heart, but her estate? The step once taken cannot be retraced. It is for life! Too late she discovers the deception to which she has fallen a victim. If she be a woman of honour and sensibility, language fails to give you an adequate conception of her disappointment and chagrin. Happy shall she be, if she is enabled to restrain her feelings of absolute hatred, contempt and disgust at the perfidious wretch she has taken to her bosom! Happy shall she be, if she *can* bear up under the intolerable load that oppresses her, and find some objects of interest in her family, to beguile her

thoughts, and to engage her affections, and contribute something towards domestic happiness and peace!

And here are other considerations. Is she not liable to *lose* her wealth and to become poor? "For riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away as an eagle towards heaven." Prov. xxiii. 5. And is there not a time for her to *die*, as well as others? Will not death separate her from all that she here possessed? Can she "give God a ransom, that she should still live for ever, and not see corruption?" Psa. xlix. 6–9. Riches shall not profit in the day of wrath, when God shall deal in judgment with her soul! Prov. xi. 4. And when she *is dead*, having heaped up riches, doth she know who shall gather them? Psa. xxxix. 6; or what blessing or what curse they may be to those who come after? "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them," Psa. lxii. 10, for they certainly are not the true glory of woman.

Females pride themselves upon their *intelligence and learning; their accomplishments and wit; and upon the favour and the praises of men.* These are all talents of value, good in their places and when applied to proper uses. But they are not the true glory of woman. Take woman at her best estate in this life. Grant her beauty and wealth; adorn her with talents and learning, and with accomplishments and wit; and enrich her with every social virtue, and present her spotless, pure and lovely, and of good report before men: yea, enable her to say, as did the young ruler in the gospel, who came kneeling to the Saviour for instruction, "All these have I kept from my youth—what lack I yet?" and what will be our Lord's reply? "*One thing thou lackest.*" That want overbalances all that you possess. You see it to be so. The crown has not been put upon your head. The love of God is not in you, and, dying without repentance and faith,

you will die without hope. Your end shall be, "to be cut off!"

We must return to the woman "that feareth the Lord." She it is that hath chosen "that good part which shall not be taken away from her;" the one thing needful, which is to be preferred before beauty and riches, and wit and learning, accomplishments and the favour of men; and passing by all others we say with the text, in its

THIRD and last division, "*she shall be praised.*" When you behold her sobriety, her love, her gentleness, her meekness, her kindness and virtue; when you behold her neatness and industry, her prayerfulness, peacefulness, conscientiousness; her decision and benevolence, yea, all the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, living and abounding in her, how lovely does she appear! She is an angel of light on earth, and she shall be honoured, respected, venerated, loved and praised by the *children of men.*

She shall be praised by her *parents*, in the family, for her dutifulness and affection; the comfort of her mother, the darling of her father's heart, the sweet associate of relatives and friends.

She shall be praised by her *companions*, for the purity of her character, and her bright and unobtrusive example before them.

She shall be praised by her *husband.* His heart rejoices in her; he remembers all her love, and surrounds her with his tenderness, and he saith with gratitude, "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers, and a prudent wife is of the Lord." Prov. xix. 14; xviii. 22.

She shall be praised by her *children.* What worlds of love, what tender recollections, and what soothing, precious, and controlling influences are wrapped up in that one endearing word *mother!* Happy are the children who have a

mother "that feareth the Lord." They rejoice in her; they esteem and copy her virtues; they obey her precepts. Their own conduct and characters testify to her excellency. "Her children rise up and call her blessed." And when she sleeps in the dust of the earth, and they shall hear her sweet voice and see her kind face no more, and feel her gentle, tender hand upon them, and meet her warm kisses on their lips no more, they will cherish her dear memory, and visit her silent resting place with tears, and carry her counsels with them to their graves.

She shall be praised by her *servants;* for they cannot forget her condescension, her kindness, her instructions, and her care.

She shall be praised by her *neighbours and kindred:* "they will give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

She shall be praised by her *brethren, her sisters, and her pastor in the Lord.* She is a mother in Israel, a saint in God's house. Her light shines, and she is a comfort and a support to God's people. Zion hath one on whom she can depend for labours and prayers; one that is not weary in well doing; one that is flourishing, and bears fruit in old age.

She shall be praised by the *world around her.* Who can estimate the happy influence of a woman that feareth the Lord, upon the children and youth, the middle aged, and the aged, of all classes and conditions, who know not the Lord? She is a living epistle, known and read of them all. Her admonitions, her counsels, and her acts of kindness and benevolence impress their hearts and consciences, and she is made the instrument of arresting them in their downward career; of instilling into them right principles, and of leading them to the Redeemer of sinners.

And let me add, above all, she shall be praised by the *Lord God and her Redeemer.* The Lord will not forget the child of his everlasting love. He will not forget how he opened her heart to attend to the concerns of her soul's salvation. He will not forget to commend her wise choice, through his grace, nor to manifest himself to her, for her comfort and her joy. He will not forget her prayers night and day, nor her love for the courts of the Lord. He will not forget how she hath brought up her children, and guided her house; nor how she hath lodged strangers, and washed the saints' feet, and relieved the afflicted, and diligently followed every good work, and given none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 1 Tim. v. 10–15. The Lord will be her God. He will be with her in life, and deliver her in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch her. Job v. 19. He will never leave nor forsake his saint, and when she is called to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, she shall fear no evil, for her Shepherd and her Redeemer will be with her, to comfort and support her there. Is she dead? How respectfully and tenderly are the last sad offices performed for her! The warm tears of her husband, bending over her and embracing her in an agony of grief, and the tears of her distressed children, are upon her cheeks. They would embalm and keep her sweet person from corruption if they could! How weep her friends and kindred, and the many who have assembled to pay her the last tribute of their respect! Her loss, how deeply felt! how sincerely deplored! At her funeral her pastor pronounces the words, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13. The grave has closed over her precious remains. They are left in the care of Him who is "the resur-

rection and the life." We follow her spirit into that upper and brighter world, whither it has been borne by the angels. She stands before the judgment-seat of Christ. He confesses her before his Father, and the holy angels. "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." See, he clothes her in a white robe; he places a crown upon her head, and gives her a palm of victory in her hand. She draws nearer unto the throne of God and the Lamb. See—she goes deeper into the glory that surrounds it. She casts her crown before it, and mingling with the redeemed, she sings with them the song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6. She is the woman that feareth the Lord. She is now "ever with the Lord." Blessed art thou in thy glory, thou sainted one! "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain—but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

1. Suffer me now, my female friends, to urge you, who have not made this happy choice, to choose at once the fear of the Lord.

When you remember what mighty influences you are capable of exerting upon your families, upon the congregations to which you are attached, upon the communities in which you dwell, and upon the world at large, and that these influences will flow down from you to generations yet unborn: when you remember what numerous talents Almighty God has given into your hands, to be used in his service and to his glory, and that he will shortly come in some day, or in some night, and require your souls, your immortal souls, of you; you ought not to be surprised that the ministers and the people of God desire you to choose the fear of the Lord.

How important! All your other acquisitions, yea, all the things you can possibly desire, are not to be compared with it! If you possessed the whole world, you would be poor indeed without the fear of the Lord. And why so? Because if you have not "the fear of the Lord," your soul cannot be saved. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Is not this the voice of the Redeemer himself? Oh, that your hearts might be opened to attend to his word, spoken to you!

You are not your own, but the Lord's. He has created you with his own hand, and redeemed you with the blood of his own Son, his own "unspeakable gift," to perishing men. You are, therefore, bound to love and to serve God supremely and for ever. This is your first, your greatest duty. All things are wrong, and will continue to be wrong with you, until this duty is, by the grace of God, properly attended to. And how criminally have you neglected it? Some of you are *daughters*, even in the morning of life, and blessed with all the means of grace and opportunities of salvation, perhaps having pious parents, who have done, and are now doing, what they can for you; and yet you have not "remembered your Creator in the days of your youth." Some of you are *mothers*. God has himself given you children. The awful responsibility of preparing them for eternity is placed in your hands, and you yourselves are "without Christ—having no hope—and without God in the world!" What a thought! Mothers without religion! Oh, shall those dear children lift up their eyes in torment, and see you at hand, and cling around your necks, and weep and wail in your ears, and press you down, deeper and deeper, in hell-fire for ever and ever! Some of you are *grandmothers*, perhaps, and after so long a time, and after so many

mercies, have no saving faith dwelling in you. Are your gray hairs to go down without hope to the grave? It touches the heart to see an aged man walking in the ways of sin and death; but it is more affecting still, to see an aged woman in this state.

Your prospects for eternity, my friends, are very dark and gloomy. Your spiritual interests demand your special care and attention, and you should give them immediate consideration. Your sins in general may not be as open, and gross, and startling as are the sins of men, yet you are both by nature and practice sinners. You are but flesh born of flesh; having a carnal mind that is enmity against God, which is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be. There is none of you that doeth good; no, not one. You have been walking in times past, and are now walking, according to the course of this world. You are not on the Lord's side, but are under the power of the evil one. God reckons you among the children of disobedience. Your days are spent in fulfilling the lusts of your fleshly mind. Oh, how far off are you from God! And they that be far from God "shall perish." You are numbered among the wicked, and "God is angry with the wicked every day." You are condemned already in your unbelief and impenitency. Yea, the wrath of God abides on you. Look up, O ye sinners! look up, and see the frown upon his awful brow! Look up, and see his hand stretched out over you, and a drawn sword in it! Be not deceived. The holy and sin-hating God is no respecter of persons, nor can he be mocked. Young, and tender, and delicate, and pleasant, and important, and cherished as you may be in your own eyes, and in the eyes of men; and good as you may think yourselves to be, and as men may tell you that you are, yet God, who knows your unregenerated, unbelieving, ungrateful, prayerless and rebellious

hearts, will reward you according to your works, and he will make you as stubble in the fire, in the day that he undertakes to deal with you. Then will he smite the crown of your defenceless heads, ye daughters of iniquity! Then will he take away all your joys and your pleasant ornaments. Your sweet odours shall afford no more delight, and you shall have burning instead of beauty.

O my friends! consider the fearful condition of your souls. Can you remain quietly, saying, Peace! peace! while you are hastening rapidly on to death and judgment, for which you are wholly unprepared? Come, come, make an effort. Break these chains that bind you. Cast off this lethargy of death. Care not for the observations of men. Be about the business of your soul's salvation. "Search the Scriptures"—long neglected as they may have been. You will find them testifying to you of Jesus, the almighty, all-sufficient, compassionate Saviour, whom you need. Go down upon your knees, unused as they may have been to bow to God, and with your heart and tongue make humble confession of all your sins—and break them off by righteousness. Plead with God to renew your heart, and open it as he did Lydia's. Plead with God to reveal his Son Jesus Christ in you, by his Holy Spirit, that you may believe in him with all your heart, and be no longer under condemnation, being justified by his blood. Plead with God to accept you in the Beloved, and implant his love and fear in your heart, and make you an heir of glory everlasting. The Lord have mercy upon you! He will not cast you out if you come in Jesus' name. The Lord turn you, and enable you to do this, and you shall be saved!

2. And be you, my friends, who fear the Lord, steadfast in your high profession, even unto the end. I mean, of course, those of you who *truly* fear the Lord. You, who

have *professed*, and have merely a name to live, while you are dead, and who in your consciences have little or no hope and comfort in your religion, less appropriate to yourselves ther the promise nor blessing of the text. You shall *not* "be praised." You may think that you stand; you may flatter yourselves upon some sort of experience and evidence, that you fear the Lord; you may look upon yourselves with great complacency because you are esteemed Christians by members of the Church, and by your pastor, and it may be, because you are praised by men for your piety and good works; but you are deceiving yourselves. Your sincerely pious friends, who know you privately, and have opportunity of knowing you intimately, see very little of spiritual religion in the general course and conduct of your life. They stand in serious doubt of your conversion! And why are you less friendly with them and less free in your intercourse, and under more restraint, than with other light-minded, trifling professors, male and female, of your acquaintance? Why do you take a dislike to them for kindly revealing to you some of your faults, and suggesting to you some of your neglected duties? Why are you offended with the minister who insists upon some fundamental doctrine of God's word; or some plain duty; or some evidence that must show itself in the heart and life of the individual who is actually regenerated? Your heart is not right in the sight of God. Spiritual religion you have no experience of. To describe it, to insist upon it, to press it upon you, makes you feel uncomfortable, unpleasant, rebellious at heart. How perfectly has the Divine Redeemer, who knows what is in man, described your character:—"For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved!" John iii. 20. Oh, how little is the Church benefitted by you! What are you doing for God? How much

does the cause of religion suffer at your hands, by your luke warmness, your negative conduct, or your direct, yet disguised opposition, or by your absolute worldly-mindedness and deadness! How frequently do you give occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully, and you appear to be wholly unconscious of the evil of your words and ways! What bitterness of spirit, what malice, what prejudice, what fixed hatred, what rejoicing in evil, what revenge! Did you never read in God's word, that hypocrites, and deceivers, and unbelievers are found in his Church? Such barren fig trees do but cumber the ground in the vineyard. Such dry and withered, fruitless branches on the vine, are doomed to be cut off and burnt in the fire!

But thanks be to God, "there is a remnant" among you, my female friends, "according to the election of grace." Many of you do fear the Lord, in spirit and in truth. Of some of you it may with truth be said, the unfeigned faith that is in you, dwelt first in your grandmothers and in your mothers. God hath raised you up to take their places, now that not a few of them are dead and gone. Blessed is that church in which are seen mothers and daughters in Israel, succeeding each other as the generations come and go on the earth.

What unnumbered benefits have flowed from the prayers, and the faith, the precepts, and examples, and labours of pious women in all ages of the Church on the earth! Who dares despise them? God hath put great power into their hands for good, though he has not called them to the high places, and to the public work and services of office-bearers in his kingdom. How have they ministered to Christ with a boundless charity, in the person of his afflicted and suffering disciples! How have they laboured in the gospel with the pastor of the flock, and with a fervent zeal that could not

be quenched! How have they sustained declining churches, bringing in again the reviving influences of God's Spirit, not staggering at the promise through unbelief, but strong in faith, giving glory to God! How have they honoured and enjoyed the means of grace by a constant attendance amidst all discouragements! How have they kept up meetings of prayer and schools, for the training of children and youth for happiness and heaven! How have they infused life and energy into benevolent societies and missionary operations! What numbers of husbands, sons and daughters, and servants, relatives, friends, and neighbours, and strangers, yea, *heathen* in distant lands, have been, directly and indirectly, converted and brought home to God, through their instrumentality! The grace of God hath wrought mightily in them, and through them, and will continue so to do, till time shall end. How many of them being dead, yet speak! Their remembrance shall outlast that of queens. Our heavenly Father hath "*sons*" and he hath "*daughters*" also; and the Lord will give them a crown of righteousness and of glory, "in that day."

Be steadfast, my Christian friends, and press forward in the fear of the Lord. "Look not behind you:—Remember Lot's wife!" You know the value of religion; the preciousness of Christ; the power of his love; the sweetness of his Spirit; the glorious hope of his salvation. You would not exchange it for all worlds. That merciful God who has led you thus far, and some of you through painful and dark hours, through grievous afflictions, temptations and trials; through sicknesses and dangers of death, and who has been with you, and comforted and sustained you, be assured, will "*never leave nor forsake you*" in time to come. "Commit the keeping of your souls to him, in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." Be strong in the Lord, and in the power

of his might, and say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Gird up your loins, be watchful, be sober. Set your light upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. Continue, by your pious examples, to cheer and animate your brethren in the Lord, and by your efforts to uphold every good work. Continue, by your prayers, your works of faith and labours of love, to draw down blessings upon your families, your churches, and the world. And when it shall please God to call you from his service here on earth, it will be to enjoy him in heaven for ever. Generations that come after you, shall rise up and call you blessed. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

THE SAVIOUR'S REGARD FOR WOMEN.

(FROM COX'S FEMALE SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY.)

The personal conduct of the divine Author of Christianity, tended to elevate the female sex to a degree of consideration in society before unknown. During the life of our Lord, women were admitted to a holy familiarity with him, attended his public labours, ministered to his wants, and adhered to him with heroic zeal, when their attachment exposed them to insult, danger and death.

Immediately after the marriage at Cana in Galilee, where he attended with his mother, he accompanied her with his brethren and disciples to Capernaum. That excellent spirit, for which he was remarkable from his earliest years, continued to influence his mind in maturer life, and taught him justly to appreciate and perfectly to exemplify the domestic and social duties. He did not scruple to converse with a Samaritan woman, who came to draw water at Jacob's well; though his disciples, in whose minds Jewish prejudices continued to prevail, expressed their astonishment at his condescension. Never was there so fine a specimen of patience, gentleness and humility, blended with true dignity, as upon that remarkable occasion. He instructed her ignorance, endured her petulance, corrected her mistakes, awakened her conscience, converted her heart, and eventually honoured her as a messenger of mercy and salvation to her Samaritan friends. At another time, when the disciples rebuked those who brought their little children to him, that he might put

his hands on them and pray, he kindly interposed; and evincing the most sympathetic tenderness towards the solicitudes which, on such an occasion, would necessarily pervade the maternal bosom, he said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven: and he laid his hands on them." On various occasions, when he performed some of his most illustrious miracles, females were personally concerned, and shared his distinguished notice and condolence. Such particularly was the case when he met the funeral procession at Nain: it was that of a young man, represented in the simple and affecting language of the evangelist, as "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." The meeting was apparently casual; but Jesus was instantly and deeply impressed with the circumstances: he in particular felt compassion for the weeping parent—addressed her in kind and gentle terms—remanded the spirit from its eternal flight, to inhabit again for a season the body from which it had so lately departed, and delivered the reanimated youth to *his mother*. He blended his tears with those of Martha and Mary, at the sepulchre of their brother; and after instructing them upon the subject of the resurrection from the dead, restored him to their wishes and affections. Women "ministered unto Jesus of their substance,"—"the daughters of Jerusalem" bewailed him when he was led to crucifixion—and the women that followed him from Galilee were deeply interested spectators of his sufferings, observed his sepulchre, and prepared spices and ointments. It was Mary Magdalene who enjoyed the honour and happiness of a first manifestation after Jesus was risen from the dead, and she was commissioned to go and inform the rest of his sorrowing disciples.

No. 175.

THE EXIGENCIES OF THE CHURCH.

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none."—Ezekiel xxii. 30.

THE path of the church through this world does not lie altogether in the regions of peace and light. Clouds and conflicts often await her march. Her hedges are sometimes broken down. Gaps are found in her walls. To borrow some similitudes from Bunyan, the pilgrim church is not always at the house Beautiful, nor on the Delectable Mountains, nor in the land of Beulah. She must climb the hill Difficulty, encounter the Fiend Apollyon, and pass through Vanity Fair. She sometimes strays into Doubting Castle and sleeps on the Enchanted Ground. Or, to take an illustration from the typical journey of Israel through the wilderness, the church, on her earthly journey, is not always at Elim, beside twelve wells of water and three score and ten palm trees. But Marah and Meribah lie in her path, Amalekites and fiery serpents infest her way.

These straits and foes are designed to try the faith of believers and test the strength of their love, to show whether their graces have a vital power of endurance, or are only tropical plants that cannot bear a frost.

So it was in the days of the prophet. God permitted the hedge to be broken, to see if any were willing to mend it.

He suffered the enemy to make gaps in the wall, to see if any were sufficiently valiant and devoted to stand there in defence. What was true then, in these respects, is true now, and always will be, while the church is militant. The instruction of the text concerns the church in every place, and at all times, but especially concerns her in the season of her trials.

In setting forth this instruction for present benefit, we shall consider some of the exigencies of the church, as presented by the imagery of the text, and the demand of those exigencies upon the instrumentality of her friends.

The imagery of the text consists of a broken hedge and a wall with gaps. A hedge is useful to enclose a field and to secure its productions. Those who labour to develope the resources of a field, generally feel interested enough to keep up the hedge. A wall is the defence of a city, in which are the goods, habitations and families of the citizens. Their interest, in all ordinary cases, is sufficient to bring them to the gaps, in defence of all they hold dear. Especially the officers and soldiers of that city, who are set expressly for its defence, may be expected to be found in the gap, if gap there be. To see the hedge broken and none to make it up, to see a gap in the wall and none to stand in it, is a sad evidence of destitution and friendlessness.

In applying this imagery to the exigencies of the church, we may properly consider the hedge and the wall as only a different form of illustrating the same idea, and therefore we have no occasion to treat of them separately.

To ascertain what constitutes a gap in the wall of the church, we must first learn what constitutes the wall itself. And we do not hesitate to say, it is the WORD OF GOD. This is the sword for conflict and the wall for defence. In other words, the wall of the church is that purpose and system of

salvation which the word of God reveals, consisting in doctrine, experience and practice; but chiefly and fundamentally in evangelical doctrine. I say chiefly in doctrine, because experience and practice are founded on doctrine, and derive from it their motive and vital energy. Experience without doctrine is but a wall of sand that has no cohesive power; or rather a wall of mist, liable to be scattered by every wind. And practice without the knowledge and love of evangelical doctrine is but the form without the power of godliness.

Evangelical doctrine then, or the great truths which constitute the plan and means of salvation for sinners, may be properly considered the wall of the church, or, at least, the foundation and strength of that wall. This system of truth is known by the term SALVATION, in reference to its object and result, as it is also known by the term GOSPEL, in reference to its joyful message. That this salvation is the wall of the church, we are taught in Isaiah xxvi. 1. "We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." "But thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise." Isaiah lx. 18. "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." Zech. ii. 5.

Such being the wall of the church we cannot mistake the gaps. False doctrine is one. Deficient or partial doctrine is another. And no doctrine at all is still another.

False doctrine or essential error is that which is in conflict with the purpose or system of salvation as a whole, or with any of its essential details. That is to say, a doctrine to be false need not necessarily and directly assail the whole system of salvation in all its parts; it is false if it deny or counteract any one of them. Because the system of salvation is perfect, all its parts are essential to that perfection, and to

detract one is to deform the whole. It is true of this system, as it is of the moral law summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. For example, a denial of the personality of the Three in One in the Godhead; a denial of the divinity, humanity, or vicarious sacrifice of Christ; a denial of the divinity, or official work of the Holy Spirit; a denial of the native and entire depravity of man, of his absolute dependence and inexcusable guilt as a sinner; a denial of the relation of the first and second Adam to the classes which they respectively represent, and of imputation as founded on that relation; a denial of electing and sovereign grace, and of the limited application as well as design of the atonement to the redemption of Christ's covenanted people; a denial of the necessity or reality of the second birth, and of the special and efficacious power of the Holy Spirit in its production; a denial of the doctrine of justification by faith alone; a denial of the sovereignty and eternal purposes of God, as a supreme ruler, or of the moral agency and accountability of man as a subject; a denial of the perpetuity of the covenant of grace, or the certain perseverance, of all true believers in holiness to eternal life; a denial of the future eternal punishment of the impenitently wicked; a denial of the resurection of the body, the immortality of the soul, or a future judgment day; are all and every one essential error, are gaps in the wall of the church; because they are jointly and severally incompatible with the purpose and plan of salvation. Take away one of these truths and the whole system is indefensible and void. Let one of them be denied, or, what is the same in effect, let that be taught which implies a denial, and the wall of the church is, in that point, broken through, a gap is opened, the unity of the system is gone, its efficiency is paralyzed, its essential character

is changed, the whole system is vitiated and perverted, it is become another gospel.

Again, deficient or partial doctrine is another gap in the wall of the church.

Deficiency of doctrine may exist in these two respects, viz:—It may be a weak, indefinite, pointless allusion to the principles of the entire system of evangelical truth, or it may be a partial statement of that truth, confined to some favourite topics which are more acceptable or less objectionable to natural feelings. In the former respect, the doctrines of the gospel are perhaps all occasionally named, or hinted at, but in a manner so cautious and equivocal, the doctrinal element is so diluted, the infusion so scanty as to be impalpable and inoperative. The great object in the case seems to be, to acquire and sustain the general reputation of orthodoxy, and yet incur no hazard of giving offence to the most sensitive caviller. Opposers of the gospel hear it without disturbance, and even with a measure of approbation, pluming themselves for their candour and patience. Their pleasure, however, is occasioned, not by any intimations of sound doctrine, but by the manifest dereliction of duty in deference to *them*. They are delighted to see, that the preacher thinks more of their favour than of his divine commission. They are willing, by compromise, to allow him the apparition of orthodoxy, if he will be careful to muffle its voice and quench its fire.

The latter respect in which teaching is deficient, viz: in a partial statement of doctrine, or in the omission of its more offensive features, results in what may be emphatically called gaps in the wall. Those doctrines, which have a more searching, humbling, and, therefore, a more salutary bearing on human feelings, are omitted altogether, while the preacher attempts to balance the omission with redundant zeal in some other quarter. He talks much and loud of what he calls

"Jesus Christ and him crucified." The burthen of his song is *free grace*, as he understands it, or indiscriminate mercy. Just as Pharisees and hypocrites of old attempted to buy off their favourite sins, by works of supererogation in other points. At least, the omission is by many esteemed a venial, insignificant affair. It is nothing but omission in a few points, which they fondly think are only expletives, made to rest and sleep on the written page of scripture, and not to be sounded in distinct notes by the trumpet of the preacher. If their preaching is sound in the greater part, they flatter themselves that a few defects will not vitiate their message. This is the common insufficient plea of excuse. A gap in the wall is the consequence, and a gap renders the whole wall useless for defence. If the enemy finds a gap by which to enter, what does he care for the entireness of the residue? In our text, the Lord of the church clearly intimates that he regards gaps as essential and fatal deficiencies, in the defences of the church; and that a failure to fill them will expose the whole land to destruction. And why should gaps not be so esteemed? If the Scriptures of truth are profitable for doctrine, and for the furniture of the man of God to every good work, if they contain a perfect system of salvation, then to omit a part, were it the smallest, is to charge God foolishly, and to say that man knows better than he, what is most for the edification and security of the church. Besides, the Gospel is not one truth, or any number of isolated truths, but a system of truth. It is a body with its frame work and covering, its joints and bands compacted, not one too many, nor one too few, but an entire body, a complete organization. And, as in the natural body, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if a vital part be wounded, the life of the whole is extinguished; so in the system of salvation, if an essential member, or a

vital part be abstracted, the whole turns to corruption. It is no longer the word of salvation, the glad tidings of Christ. Whoever takes liberty to dispense with a vital part spoils the whole. What he preaches may be true, as a separate proposition, but not true as the gospel. And while it professes to be the gospel, it is responsible for the effects of error, because such effects it produces. A constituent substance may be salutary as a whole, and yet destructive in its parts separated. The air we breathe, on which life depends, is rank poison in its decomposed parts, or in their disarranged proportion. So the gospel, while as a whole, and rightly received, it is a savour of life, in its decomposition, or its misreception, is a savour of death. Hence the emphasis which Paul gives to the announcement of this feature of his own preaching, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." And the preacher who cannot say this, in sincerity and godly simplicity, cannot say that he preaches the gospel, or that he is not chargeable with leading men astray by falsifying the truth. What the ministers of Christ are commissioned to preach to every creature is the GOSPEL; not fragments of the gospel, but the gospel as a whole.

I have already said that false doctrine, or a denial of essential truth in any one point, vitiates and perverts the whole. I now say that omission or defective statement of any vital truth of the gospel is the same in effect. It presents a perverted, a false gospel. A witness in court will perjure himself by keeping back a part of the truth as well as by positive falsity. Though what he utters may be true, yet he misrepresents the case by disturbing the relation of facts. So the preacher may utter truth, and nothing but truth, and yet produce the effects, and be responsible for the propagation, of falsehood; because he misrepresents the case, he disrupts the chain of evangelical truth, he dislocates the

system, he preaches error by partial statement of doctrine. He is, therefore, a false witness, a blind guide, a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Again: No doctrine at all is another gap in the walls of the church, or rather it makes a gap of the whole.

In communicating and receiving the message of salvation, some, we are constrained to believe, overlook, altogether, the word GOSPEL in the ministerial commission. They appear to read the commission as if it were, "Go ye into all the world, preach to every creature." And they appear to consider the commission executed if they preach their own inventions, and secure their own interests. They are sometimes called CONSERVATIVE. Conservative of what? Of God's truth? No. They leave that to take care of itself. Of the interests of the church? No. They have no taste for mending hedges or filling gaps. Conservative of what, except their own dear selves? They do not perplex themselves with principles, either in their researches or expositions; therefore, they leave doctrines out of their programme of instruction, as a useless encumbrance, and resort to excitement and external appearances, for fruits of their labour and seals of their ministry. As the first word in the commission is "GO," they begin with locomotion; and as literal constructionists, they follow out the terms, "into all the world," as closely as possible. They are conspicuous every where, except at a fallen hedge or a broken gap. They are lavish of public speeches and multifarious harangues, flattering and being flattered, deceiving and being deceived, sacrificing to their own net, and burning incense to their own drag; and have zeal for every cause, sympathy for every purpose, except contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. But when they come to the word *Gospel*, in the commission, they pass it over as among the non-essen-

tials of the matter, or they find themselves so exhausted with preliminary effort, that they have no time nor energy left for its examination; or they give that meaning to the word which best suits their personal convenience, and is most in keeping with their cherished tastes. They go, as much as possible, into all the world, and preach, what? Anything and everything which fancy or policy may dictate; anything, except evangelical doctrine. They abjure no topic, they dread no hidden rock, they carefully avoid no danger, a Christian doctrine only excepted. Their preaching is extolled as eminently practical, experimental, feeling. Practical of what? Experimental of what? Feeling of what? Anything, save the doctrines of the gospel. They abound in charity towards every point of the compass save one; they are tolerant of every shade of sentiment save one; they can hold fellowship with all the *isms* of an innovating age; they are at peace with all the hedge-destroyers and gap-makers of the exterior camp; but when any appear to make up the hedge and stand in the gap of Christian doctrine, then charity fails, toleration turns its back, fellowship congeals, and they are ready to join in the cry, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."

Those who thus abjure evangelical doctrine are the sappers and miners digging under the walls of the church, and destroying their very foundations. Their work is not so visibly alarming as that of those who openly teach false doctrine, or openly suppress the truth. Their operations do not appear above ground. They keep up appearances, vaunt of visible success, spread out a long list of converts, show a communion board thronged with guests, exult in their skill, and sneer at the deliberate movements of orthodoxy; until suddenly the foundations give way, the walls sink into a pit, and the church is in ruins.

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We proceed next to consider the demand which the exigencies of the church make on the instrumentality of her friends.

It is understood here that God, in the kingdom of his grace, works by means and instruments. We do not expect miracles in the accomplishment of divine purposes or promises. If the church has walls of sound doctrine, those walls are to be kept by appointed instrumentality. If gaps occur, they must be defended and repaired by those who are officially set for defence, and by every true hearted disciple, in aiding and sustaining that defence. And if the instruments and the efforts are wanting, if God looks for a man to make up the hedge or stand in the gap, and finds none, then that field, that city, in other words, the interests of the church in that locality, are about to be abandoned to destruction. We may further remark, in a general view, that the representation in the text evinces duty and responsibility in the case. God does not look for men to do what he does not require them to do, and in doing which he is not ready to bless them. To say that God looks for men to perform defensive duties to the church, is the same as to say, that there are those obligated, and whom God requires to perform the service at all hazards. And the fact that none are found is sad proof of universal degeneracy.

These things being duly considered, the way is prepared to specify some practical duties implied in making up the hedge and standing in the gap, in other words, what the exigencies of the church demand.

The first is *vigilance.* If gaps are to be defended or dilapidation prevented, they or their antecedents must first of all be seen. And to discover them seasonably, the friends of the church must keep their eyes open and their attention awake. There is a kind of dreamy quiescence, which some-

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times comes over the professed friends of the church, and evaporates all their energies in kind wishes and charitable hopes. Gap after gap is opened, walls and towers are undermined, and yet, kind souls, they think there is no fundamental error, no essential inroad. Sometimes an explosion and a crash come thundering so loud that their slumbers are disturbed for a moment, and a suspicion is awakened that there may be somewhere a tendency to fatal error. But they soon relapse into profound sleep, dreaming meanwhile that the walls are safe and the danger distant. Now it is evident that such a state of sluggishness will never discover gaps, until they are too many and too wide to be remediable. Vigilance is a prime duty of those to whom the defences of the church are entrusted. The first attempt to effect a breach is sufficient cause of alarm. And he deserves not the name of friend or watchman, who can quietly stand by and see a single stone removed from the wall. For the disposition or the power which can remove one can remove another and another, until the gap is wide. The first stone removed is, so far as the intentions of him who does it are concerned, the removal of the whole, and will surely end in that, unless seasonably prevented. But when the solid foundations begin to shake, when a false doctrine is introduced, or an organic principle of the gospel drops into disuse, or is so wrapped up in a cloud of obscurity as not to be cognizable by friend or foe, then is the time for effective resistance, the time for all that love the truth to stand in the gap.

Vigilance in this case is concerned to know what constitutes the essential doctrines of the gospel, no less than to perceive variations from them. For by the knowledge of truth must be that of error. And the first requisite to effectual vigilance is a definite, scriptural, determinate view of evangelical truth in its essential features. It is unquestionable

that the cause of truth has suffered extensively from the loose, indefinite views of essential truth which prevail in many minds even of professed friends. They are in suspense as to the boundaries of essential truth; they have never yet surveyed its territory and set up its monuments, and, therefore, are unprepared to tell where encroachment begins. They have never scrutinized the livery of error so closely as to penetrate its exterior cloak. And they must make poor watchmen who cannot discern between friend and foe, and whose mental vision is so obtuse as not to detect shades of error, until they have displaced all the reflection of light and mantled the whole field in darkness. He will be but a poor watchman, and his vigilance will be of little avail, who is so unobserving of distinctions, as not to be able to tell a wolf in sheep's clothing from one of the veritable flock. The wants of the church then demand that the lines be run out, and the bounds set up between her domain and the regions of error; so that encroachment may be open to observation and repulsed in its first stages; and that it may not be necessary to wait until the enemy has battered down the walls and assaulted the citadel of truth, before we can feel warranted to meet him as a foe. In other words, the church demands that her friends have their minds made up and settled, as to the principles of fundamental truth, principles by which they intend to abide, and the compromise of which they will never listen to for a moment. This being done, the next requisite of vigilance is a wakeful attention to all movements on the frontiers. Tendencies to error are not to be overlooked or allowed. For what is tendency to error but the incipient stage of the pestilence, the disturbance of the system by foreign elements; the removal of which depends on an early arrest? And he is a physician of little skill or prudence that suffers disease to be fully developed

before he begins to counteract it; an unwise surgeon who waits for the whole system to be affected before he removes a mortified limb. Vigilance is specially and appropriately adapted to detect sinister tendencies; that is the sphere of its usefulness. The graver aberrations of open heresy will be detected by their own manifestations. For when it comes to maturity it throws off its cloak, and bids defiance. The church then in her wants deprecates the man who can make himself easy about tendencies to error, either because he cannot discern them or does not appreciate their power. Let no such man be depended on to make up a hedge or stand in a gap. All his tendencies are to disaster. Vigilance is an official heresy-hunter. Its vocation is to find out the nests and break the eggs before they hatch out into scorpions. Such vigilance the wants of the church demand. And her friends, at the risk of opprobrious epithets, and with a noble indifference to the sneers of traitors or the misgivings of timid and drowsy watchmen, will give heed to her dangers, will be wakeful and keen in their discernment of errors approaching or instant, open or lurking.

The second demand which the exigencies of the church make upon the instrumentality of her friends is, that they beware of the insidious pleas of peace, union and charity.

In other words, the wants of the church demand of her friends that they duly distinguish between words and things, and that they be guided by realities rather than names. Otherwise the vital interests of the cause of truth will be sacrificed to sheer imposition. When the pleasant words, peace, union and charity, are found to signify that the friends of truth shall keep still, while its assailants go on with their work of invasion and corruption; or that the former shall stand aside while the latter break down hedges and open gaps, preparatory to ravaging the field and plundering the

city; it becomes the friends of the church to be aware of the fact and act accordingly. Jesus Christ is gloriously the Prince of Peace. His kingdom, in its internal structure and dominant spirit, is a kingdom of peace and love. The man of God must not strive, but be gentle to all men, and, as far as in him lies, live peaceably. This is one branch of truth and duty. But there is another branch relating to the actual position of the church in a militant state. This latter branch of truth and duty, though perfectly accordant with the other in spirit and motive, differs in present manifestations. The truth is, the kingdom of Christ is antagonistic to the spirit of the world, and the two cannot come into contact without collision, and thus the former is made the innocent occasion of strife. It does not seek it nor provoke it, but the spirit of the world will have war, and all that the church has left to its choice is to fight or die. This the Prince of Peace himself plainly intimates when he says, "I came not to send peace on earth but a sword." It is, moreover, true that the enmity of the world is not always patent in avowed warfare. It is often concealed, and seeks its object under the garb of peace and union. In these circumstances, the question is forced upon the church, Shall the dearest interests of truth be tamely surrendered to false pretences? Shall the cloak of love and union be a passport to enemies in disguise? Shall the fold be thrown open to wolves in sheep's clothing? What says the great and good Shepherd to this? "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." "By their fruits," (not by their dress or their names,) "ye shall know them." What say the Scriptures of truth, the most peaceable of all books, to this question? "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." "The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peace-

able." "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be anathema." "If any man come unto you and bring any other gospel, receive him not into your houses, neither bid him God-speed, for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." If then it be a duty, clearly revealed, to resist error in whatever guise it may come; when, I ask, can the occasion be more evident or pressing, than when gaps are made in the walls of Zion? Whatever may be the pretence or plea, however unctuous with professions of love and peace, however bedizened with plans of union, the fact of a gap in the wall, made or attempted, is evidence enough of hostility. And he who doubts or lingers after such a demonstration is not the man for exigencies or gaps. Suppose the city guards find a gap in the wall, and they find there certain operators busily at work to enlarge it, but they affirm that they are men of peace and mean no harm; that there is no essential difference between a gap and a gate; that their object is to improve the condition of the city, to keep up with the spirit of the age; for it has become fashionable to make gaps instead of entering in by the DOOR; and they invite to union and cooperation; at least they insist that the guards shall keep still and give no alarm; they are horror-struck at the thought of contention, they denounce controversy, and claim to be admitted as the ruling power without question: what are the guards to do in such case? Are they to believe words rather than deeds? What does God look for at such a time? Is it a man to stand in the gap and defend; or a man to trim and skulk, a man to compromise, and surrender the vital interests of Zion to bold and daring assault, or to insidious intrigue, in the guise of union and charity?

It may be a difficult and delicate operation to decide in all cases between spurious pretence and sound reality. It

may involve serious personal responsibility and exposure to popular odium. But what if it does? Are duties to be declined because they are difficult or delicate? Many precious lives would be sacrificed by the timidity of the surgeon who should practise by such a rule. With all the difficulty of the duty in full view, yes, and its invidiousness too, our Saviour says, "Beware of false prophets." And he does not in the least degree modify the injunction, because they "come in sheep's clothing." And what is this sheep's clothing worn by a wolf? It cannot be open, avowed hostility or error, for that would be the wolf's own clothing. It must be the guise of the Christian graces covering false doctrine—union and charity in pretence, heresy and enmity at heart. The injunction of Christ to beware of such as assume this appearance can amount to nothing less than the declaration, that no pretence or plea of Christian graces or spiritual operation is a valid passport for one false doctrine, or one omission of essential truth. A wolf is not to be admitted to the fold, however much wool may be on his back. But how shall we know? Christ says "by their fruits." The fruit of a false prophet is false doctrine, and that has no more connection with revivals or Christian graces, than wool with a wolf's skin. And whenever they are in apparent connection we may be sure of deception; for grapes will not grow on thorns nor figs on thistles. And those sentinels on the walls of Zion who suffer themselves to be deluded with such false pretences are unfaithful to their duty.

Another demand which the exigencies of the church make on the instrumentality of her friends is, that they duly understand and appropriately treat the elements of her weakness and of her strength.

In the prosecution of any great enterprise, weights and hindrances are to be removed as well as advantages and

facilities to be secured. In erecting a permanent edifice, materials must be selected with a discriminating eye, lest a crumbling stone or a mouldering pillar endanger the whole work. So the church in her trials cries aloud to be relieved of inactive, useless incumbents. Or, to apply the imagery of the text to the point, the city besieged, with gaps in its walls, needs the best and the most of its resources. It wants no useless limbs to clothe, no idle bodies to protect and feed. It calls for defenders, not for consumers nor exempts. It demands devoted self-sacrificing patriots to man the walls and stand in the gaps, and that all others evacuate as speedily as possible. If they remain, they are an element of weakness, a tax on energies that are needed in the gaps. But are there such clogs in the church, and who are they? I answer, Christ intimates their existence when he says, "He that is not for me is against me." And he more than intimates their existence when he says to one church in particular, "Thou art neither cold nor hot." As to the question, what class of persons constitute this element of weakness, I remark, they are verbal friends who have nothing better than fair words and kind wishes with which to make up a hedge or fill a gap. They are the men who nestle among the treasures and honours of the church, and are exceedingly conservative of the fleece of the flock and the temporalities of their location; but when a call is made, or when God looks for men to stand in the gap, they have other matters in hand, or deprecate controversy. Such is one of the elements of Zion's weakness, which needs to be understood and properly treated. And how to be treated? I answer, as much as possible, separate from such, keep clear of them. At all events, trust nothing to them, expect that in every crisis they will fail and perhaps desert. Gideon of old in a crisis sent home, by divine direction, all those of his army

who did not stand the test of true, reliable men. So the defenders of Zion's walls must relieve themselves of doubtful characters, of double-dealers, of timid, faint-hearted friends. Let them go home and be quiet on their couches; or, if they prefer it, let them go over to the enemy, for they are far less dangerous as enemies than as friends. The church has always, since the day that the Saviour was betrayed with a kiss for thirty pieces of silver, to the present hour, suffered more from false friends than from avowed enemies. And now when trials come, and gaps are to be filled, the friends of the church must be careful to separate themselves from every one who leaves room for a question or doubt as to the direction of his sympathies. If any one is not sufficiently interested in the welfare of the city to be alarmed at a gap in the wall, he may as well go to the camp outside first as last. And if he will not go of himself; let him have a kind but decided transfer.

In this view of the subject it appears that there are occasions, when separation from extraneous and neutralizing mixture, when unflinching resistance, by the weapons of Christian warfare, are an imperative duty. And the exigencies of the church require that these occasions should be known and responded to. The disastrous consequences of indiscriminate aggregation, for I will not call it union, are surely not less than those of perpetual division and strife. It is but ruin either way. On the one hand, the church is drawn into a whirlpool of error and corruption, on the other, she is dashed among the breakers. The safe course, and the only safe course, is to cultivate union so far as a basis of union exists, and to this end, to separate from all disturbing principles. Union on a false basis is treason to truth, and its peace is apostasy.

But the exigencies of the church also require of her

friends that they understand and apply the elements of her strength. That "union is strength" has come to the maturity of a proverb. This is true of real, substantial union, that is to say, union of principle and aim; because such union collects and concentrates individual effort, and thus produces a combined force peculiar to itself. The simultaneous foot-fall of a body of men will shake and demolish a structure which millions of separate steps would not have moved. While then the exigencies of the church demand of her true friends the most and the best of their individual exertion, they demand also all the advantage which can be realized from united counsel and action. And, to this end, they demand that all unessential differences, all personal interests, prejudices and tastes be merged in the great points of vital importance; that forms, habits and educational partialities be laid on the altar of the general and greater good, and that each of Zion's true friends and watchmen, when called to stand beside his fellow in the gap, be ready to make a willing sacrifice of all for Christ and his truth. They that are united in principle and aim can unite, and should unite, in other respects. The only question with them should be, What form of church government and concentrated action is best suited to secure the common interest? This question settled, let them see eye to eye in the prosecution, and not waste their energies on personal partialities.

Another demand which the exigencies of the church make on the agency of her friends is the more full and clear exhibition of evangelical truth.

As the bulwarks of the church consist in the essential doctrines of the gospel, so the repair of breaches and the defence of gaps in her walls can be effected only by the liberal use of the solid material of which her walls are constructed. The more that vital truth is assailed and maligned,

the more must it be set forth and vindicated. Those that stand in the gap must arm themselves with the pure gospel, and rally under the standard of distinctive, unalloyed doctrine. Every degree of departure from this standard is but a surrender of the vital interests of the church, and every step of such retreat, renders another and another retrograde movement more imminent, until the whole ground is lost, the whole wall prostrate.

These views are sustained and confirmed by the consideration that the real, and only true prosperity of the church, always consists in the clearest exhibition of evangelical truth, and the greatest amount of its appropriate influence. The success of her mission is not to be estimated by the scale of her visible membership or her external quiet. These are not the paramount objects of her mission. She is rather to be the pillar and ground of the truth, and all her members are called to be Christ's witnesses. Visible extension and quietude may exist in large measure, while her great work is almost, if not quite, an entire failure. Some of the most corrupt and disastrous periods of her history have been those of her greatest amplitude and external peace. This, the experience of the church at large, and of its constituent branches, teaches with equal verity. It is at least a supposable case, that a pastor may enter on his charge with the maxim, as the leading principle of his administration, that he must, at all events, make friends, and secure a quiet resting-place. In pursuance of this chief end he devotes himself to the tastes and feelings of his flock, rather than to the high duties of his vocation. Instead of spending his time mainly in his study and with his Bible, investigating and elucidating its great fundamental principles, and preparing to feed the flock with knowledge and understanding, he is abroad in unprofitable visiting, or he dissipates his time and talents

in useless journeys and public demonstrations. In accordance with his leading maxim, he rarely touches a doctrinal point, and when he does, it is in such vague and general terms, that friends and foes may understand it to their own liking. He throws wide open the portals of the church, discards distinctive creeds, graduates his scale of qualification for admission, by ardour of feeling rather than by the word of truth, numbers converts by hundreds, counterfeits the seal of the Spirit by temporary excitement, draws in his net with some of all sorts, and, without distinction, places them on the list of increase. The church is replenished with names, the fold is in peace, the parish united, all parties are pleased with themselves, and the pastor has the reputation of a successful ministry. "He is a precious revival-man." And what is still worse is, that in some cases orthodoxy has the credit of this oblique traverse of ministerial policy. The minister claims to be a sound orthodox man. Whether he is so or not, is of no beneficial consequence to his charge, while he is careful to keep his orthodoxy locked up in his own mind. Is this real or only apparent success? Let succeeding generations give the answer. But certain it is, that the great object and purpose of preaching the gospel has not been effected, if it has at all been touched. Believers are not built up on their most holy faith, principles are unsettled, discussion falls into desuetude, the Scriptures are not searched, vital godliness dies out, and one or two consequences must follow; either the whole mass sinks to putrefaction, becomes Arminian, Unitarian or Universalian; or there succeeds a disruption, and a remnant is saved so as by fire.

Is this the mission of the church—this the work of the ministry set for the defence of the gospel? No, this is not success, it is failure; and will so appear in the great day of

account. I repeat, the great purpose of the ministry, the real prosperity of the church, consist in the promulgation and maintenance of the essential doctrines of the gospel, and their appropriate influence in the hearts and lives of men. All else is trifling. A failure here is a failure entire, an abortion. Those, therefore, who would mend the hedge or stand in the gap, must stand fast in the faith, summon to their aid neglected truths, and restore them to their place in the walls of the church. And in proportion as these doctrines are denied and calumniated, so much the more must the trumpet give a distinct sound in their annunciation. Those who stand in the gap should be nerved with moral courage not to fear the face of clay; they should be animated with a holy intrepidity, like Paul on Mars Hill, or Luther, when he nailed his theses to the door of the church and committed the Papal bull to the flames.

Lastly, the exigencies of the church in her trials demand of her defenders deep humiliation and earnest prayer.

These straits of the church are divine frowns. These gaps in the wall are an indication that God has a controversy with her—they are calls to repentance. Those who are the voluntary and culpable instruments of these visitations are the objects more of pity than of anger. In many instances they know not what they do, and we have reason to pray, "Father, forgive them." But why are they left to such blindness and infatuation? Why do they find countenance in the church? Why do any of the professed people of God love to have it so? It may be said, in reply, one reason is that the faith and patience of the true believer may be tried, that his gold may be refined, and his dross consumed, that his supreme love to the truth and the God of truth may be suitably tested. But is this all? Is there no ingratitude, no unbelief, no idolatrous attachments, no undervaluing of privi-

leges, no forgetfulness of past mercies to be mourned over and forsaken? Has not Jeshurun waxed fat under distinguished favours, spiritual and temporal? Has not his heart been lifted up in self-confidence, while he has been tempted to say, "Who shall bring ME down to the ground?" Trials and rebukes, by whatever means sent, or from whatever quarter they come, call upon all the friends of Zion to humble themselves before God; to confess their sins; to consider their ways: that his anger may be turned away, and that his hand may not be stretched out still.

Equally emphatical and imperative is the call to earnest, fervent prayer. This battle is not ours but God's. It is no petty strife between the potsherds of the earth or the church for ephemeral preeminence. It is no dispute of disciples by the way, who shall be the greatest. It is the conflict of truth with error, of the kingdom of light with the kingdom of darkness. The God of this battle is to be acknowledged, dependence on his power and grace is to be felt. And whatever of success he has promised his faithful servants, he will be inquired of to do it for them. He looks for the men that will make up the hedge and stand in the gap; but he looks for those that go forth in his name, not in their own; for those that depend upon his strength, not their own; for those that seek his glory, not their own; and that will render to him, not to themselves, the praise. These considerations all conspire to show that a spirit of prayer, manifesting itself in earnest, believing cries for direction and success, is the only proper spirit with which to undertake the defence of Zion's walls or the repair of her hedges.

When David saw the sword of the destroying angel stretched out over Jerusalem, his resort was the altar of prayer; it was effectual—prayer returned the sword to its scabbard. So, when the friends of Zion perceive the signs

of impending ruin, when they see gaps and dilapidation around them, their resort, in connection with other appointed means, is prayer. God has never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain. Will he now? Let every man, then, that stands in the gap, arm himself with the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, wielded by a spirit of prayer, that he may be steadfast and unmovable in the strength of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, resting in his assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness." Let him look in faith to him who has all power in heaven and earth in his hands, and the issue cannot be doubtful.

Thus far have we pursued the course of thought suggested by the text. Now it is desirable to follow out these suggestions in some reflections more immediately interesting to ourselves. We have seen that false doctrine inculcated, or sound doctrine wholly or partially suppressed, constitutes a gap in the walls of Zion; and that God looks for men, for church members, for Christian ministers, to stand in the gap. Theoretically, therefore, the subject is within our comprehension. But there is still a practical view to be taken, which constitutes the finish and utility of the whole. The Christian sentinel may understand the philosophy of a gap and be in full possession of its theoretical aspects, and yet it may be a question with him what and where is an actual gap within the circle of his responsibility. It is exceedingly important that this subject be rightly viewed practically and personally, for on such view depends all that is to be expected from prompt and decided action. We cannot hope that a man will *bestir* himself in respect to a mere abstraction. How then is the tangible reality of the exigency to be ascertained? I answer, there are two ways by which it may be done. One is a description of each particu-

lar case on its own merits; the other is a hypothetical description of common features, which may apply to all cases: so that, by comparison, every person may know a gap at first sight. I shall adopt, substantially, the latter method in trying to give this subject a practical bearing. I have then not much, if anything, to do with the chronology, locality or personalities of heresy or heretics. Common and distinctive features, such as mark them at all times and in all places, are the particular objects of our present inquiry. In the light of our subject then, we turn our view backward along the track of the church's history to discover illustrative facts, and collect some indicative features of gaps in Zion's walls. In the reign of Ahab, king of Israel, idolatry was taken into royal favour, and spread through the land, so that out of the millions of Israel, only seven thousand could be found that bowed not the knee to Baal; and these lived in obscurity. Was that a gap? and if it was, who was there to stand in it? There was one man, and but one in the whole realm, and that man was Elijah. But for his instrumentality, the land would have been destroyed. And yet he was denounced, threatened and vilified. In the latter days of the kingdom of Judah, we find the kingdom overrun with false prophets and idolatrous practices from the throne to the cottage. The word of God was neglected and discarded. Was that a gap? and if so, who was there to stand in it? Lamenting Jeremiah attempted to do it, and his reward was a dungeon. The land was so far gone that even Noah, Daniel and Job could not have saved it. In later and nominally Christian times, the doctrine of the native innocency of man was advanced and obtained an alarming currency, and the doctrine of justification by faith alone, was denied. In the place of the latter came the dogma of meritorious works not only, but of works of supererogation also, laying the foundation of saleable indulgences. Then

the supremacy of human reason was asserted, and the Scriptures put to school to rationalism. The rationalistic system began in the doubts and quibbles of Arminianism, in relaxing the stern features of revealed truth, in accommodation to human reason by teaching human ability and independence. The system grew into Unitarianism, Universalism and Pantheism; and finally culminated in cold formality or hot fanaticism. The fruit was a denial of the supremacy of God, of the lost and impotent state of sinners, of the covenants of Redemption and Grace, and of their correlatives Election and Perseverance, and of the necessity and reality of the second birth. Were these gaps in the walls of Zion? Such they were esteemed by the good and faithful men of those days, and such they proved to be in fact. For through them came in floods of temporizing and halfway-covenant professors, until the distinction between the world and the church was well nigh obliterated. Were there any to stand in the gaps then? Yes. The names of Augustine, of Calvin and of Edwards have been immortalized by their successful labours in making up the hedge and standing in the gap. It were well for those that sneer at such labours to consider how often the very existence of the church, under God, has depended on these means. If they please to stigmatize the whole company of reformers and martyrs as a race of heresy-hunters and schismatics, let them be duly apprized how much in this respect they sympathize with evil spirits, and all incorrigible enemies of true religion. It is no occasion of wonder that those who love darkness rather than light, should decry labours and instruments by which the light is shed abroad and their deeds reproved.

We come then fairly to the question, What and where are the gaps now? This question I shall answer hypothetically, taking advantage of the light afforded by the preceding discussions and illustrations. Does the eye of an attentive

observer rest on any region within the precincts of the visible and Protestant church, where the word of God is no longer the oracle or the standard; where the living truth of God is ostracised in favour of rationalistic speculations; where the essential doctrines of the cross of Christ are rarely and obscurely stated or wholly omitted? Are there regions, nominally Christian, and those highly favoured in hereditary advantages, where we may go from pulpit to pulpit, and never hear the doctrines of native and total depravity, of the new birth, of electing and sovereign grace, of entire dependence, or of justification by faith alone, taught according to the Scriptures; or, if taught at all, the instances form rare or solitary exceptions to the general practice; and where preaching is in subserviency to the tastes and partialities of rich and fashionable hearers, rather than their conversion to God, and the edifying of the body of Christ? Do we light on any portion of the Christian domain where, in colleges, theological seminaries and religious periodicals, perversion or suppression of evangelical doctrine constitutes the general rule, and faithful teaching the exception; where funds devoted to the cause of Christ are desecrated to the propagation of error, or the sustenance of inefficient, self-loving friends; where heresies and delusions are dressed out in the nomenclature of better days, and commend themselves to public confidence by the plea, "We have Abraham to our father;" where Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, and make void the law of God and the faith of Christ by their speculations and traditions; where the professed friends of truth are extremely prudent and conservative, in respect to their temporal interests and worldly reputation, shrinking from the post of labour and exposure, to hide themselves in the mass, or under the shield of some great name; while declaimers, and ranters, and dealers in religious romance, are bold, noisy and popular, drawing away

disciples after them, occupying the chief seats in conventions, the uppermost rooms at feasts and convivial banquets, teeming with jokes and banter, all things to all men, and yet hailed as oracles of religious sentiment and champions of the faith; and where false prophets, according to prophetic description, "make the people of the Lord to err, bite with their teeth and cry Peace, and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him?" Micah iii. 5. Do we find any or all of these things at any time or in any place, and is there not a gap in the wall? Who but a papist or an infidel will deny it? And, if such be the case, does not God look for those among his professed people, among his ministers, who shall stand in this gap? And shall he find none? This is a question for each individual of us to bring near and lay at the door of his own conscience. And it is a question on the decision of which are depending the vital interests of the church and the land. Yes, the land. God says in the text, "I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me, for the land, that I should not destroy it." What darker cloud can hang over the political or social condition of a land, than that which comes from religious truth perverted, doctrines suppressed, and, consequently, the blessing of God suspended, his displeasure incurred, and the source of morals corrupted? A land may be threatened alarmingly, in consequence of the great national evils of slavery, popery and intemperance; but all these together do not, as a cause of danger, compare with a corrupted, falsified gospel. Those are evils of the exterior life, this of the inner man. They exist in the extremities, this strikes the vitals.

Who then will consecrate himself and his substance to the Lord this day and stand in the gap? Say not in your heart, Some one else must do it, and I pray thee have me excused. Has not God raised you up for such a day as this?

Is he not now seeking for men to stand in the gap, and why not you? If you altogether hold your peace and refuse your aid, then will deliverance come from some other quarter, but what will become of you? Say not, The labour is arduous, the sacrifice great, we cannot bear them; the labourers are few and weak, we shall be overwhelmed. This battle is not yours but God's; and can he not work by few as well as by many, by the weak as well as the strong? Have you forgotten the babe in the ark of bulrushes; the stripling of Bethlehem with his sling and stone before the giant of Gath; the little band of Gideon, sifted to a mere apology for physical strength, in the presence of an immense host; the eleven fishermen of Galilee starting on the enterprise of converting the world? And, if you have not forgotten these illustrious examples of divine strength made perfect through human weakness, then "be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises;" "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Say not the work is odious in the estimation of all earthly minds, and will surely bring reproach and obloquy. This is true beyond all manner of doubt. But what if it be so? Is this the first time that reproach, and even imprisonment and death, have been the consequence of a faithful testimony to the truth? There have been those who blessed God that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name. What if our weakness and insignificance are paraded and ridiculed? This is no news. It is just what we feel, and had felt it before it was cast in our teeth. But when we are weak, then are we strong, and therefore we glory in that weakness, that the strength of Christ may rest upon us. What if the cry

of controversy is raised, and the charge of making divisions and turning the world upside down is levelled at our heads? The apostles of Christ encountered the same charge. Can a hedge be made up, or a gap in the wall repaired or defended, without meeting and repelling aggression? A broken hedge, a gap in the wall, is sufficient evidence that an enemy is at work, and when the necessity occurs, defence and repair are unavoidable, to be effected peaceably if we can, but forcibly, by spiritual weapons, if we must.

The question then returns, Who will make up the hedge, or stand in the gap? Shall the God of the church seek for those who are willing to take up this cross, and find none—none who will come forward to the work, who will turn away from the counsels of flesh and blood, who will lend no ear to the pleadings of temporal interest, who will give no heed to the misgivings of timid friends, on the one hand, or the sneers of boastful antagonists on the other, but, in the heroism of faith, and after the example of queen Esther, resolve, We will stand in the gap, and if we perish we perish?

I am sensible that my share in this work is well nigh finished. I have endeavoured, in my poor and imperfect way, to stand by the truth of God, in evil as well as in good report; and I have never been sorry that such has been my aim. But my day of labour is far spent, the night is at hand, in which I can no longer work. All I can do is to leave a testimony to the truth of the gospel as I understand it, which I do this day. And I would say to my younger brethren, and all the friends of Christ and his cause, who feel and lament the errors and delusions of the day, God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this house of bondage. "Trust in the Lord for ever." "The word of the Lord endureth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

Amen and Amen.

[To fill up a vacant space, we make the following extract from an able tract of the late Rev. S. G. Winchester, which deserves to be much more widely circulated than it has been. It is No. XXI. in the Board's series of tracts, and is entitled, "The Importance of Doctrinal and Instructive Preaching."—EDITOR OF THE BOARD.]

A sensible writer, after enumerating the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel, asks, "Can any clergyman preach these doctrines to one class of people, and not to another, without violating his duty, and wounding his conscience? Is he to be deterred, on the one hand, by the erudition or fastidiousness of his hearers, or, on the other, by their ignorance? Is he to be silent upon these topics before a vulgar congregation, lest they should turn the grace of God into lasciviousness; lest they should continue in sin, that grace may abound? Or ought he to forbear dwelling upon them before persons more elevated in point of station and ability, because, forsooth, it might be more gratifying to learned pride, merely to see the rays of evidence concentrated into a focus, or to have some elaborate criticism presented to them; or more fascinating to 'ears polite,' to listen to a smooth and flowery eloquence, which has no tendency to make men tremble? Have not the learned, as well as the unlearned, an interest in our Saviour's atonement? Ought they not both to be equally reminded, that without Him they can do nothing? The mathematician of old informed the king, that there was no royal way to geometry. And we may boldly aver, that the former description of persons can enter heaven only by the appointed way; even by Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Did Paul, who sat at the feet of Gamaliel, rest his hopes of eternal life on any other creed than that professed by Peter, a poor fisherman, who ex-

claimed, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.'"

Evil effects will follow, moreover, if the doctrines of the Gospel be vaguely taught, and exhibited in a very general or summary manner. Hearers will receive very indefinite and crude views of the Gospel, by no means satisfactory or profitable. Thus, if it be merely stated that we are saved through the death of Christ, no definite idea of the plan of salvation is conveyed to the mind; and unless the connection between our salvation and the death of Christ be explained, and the intermediate links exhibited to view, the Gospel cannot be said to be fully preached.

So, also, if it be merely stated that man's estate of sin and misery is in some way connected with the fall of our first parents, no definite idea of our depravity or guilt is conveyed to the mind. The mere use of terms and phrases, however appropriate or suitable they may be, in themselves considered, if their meaning and force be not explained, will not afford distinct nor accurate views to a mind not taught nor trained to the apprehension of divine truth. Indeed, terms and phrases, when not explained, may convey to the minds of hearers a meaning opposite to that entertained by the preacher himself, and thus mislead them. For example: the term *substitution*, when used in reference to Christ's dying for sinners, may be understood by hearers, especially such as have been properly indoctrinated, to mean that Christ suffered the penalty of the law, in the room of sinners, as their substitute; while the preacher may mean nothing more than that the sufferings of Christ were a substitute for the penalty itself. Here the two meanings are diametrically opposite to each other.

No. 176.

THE DYING IRISH GIRL.

"Mother," said a dying girl in Ireland, "it is a dreadful thing to die!"

"It is that, my darling," the mother said, as she fondly gazed with tearful eyes upon the fading cheek of her child. "Oh, that I could die instead! But you have confessed, and why are you still afraid?"

"Yes, I have confessed every sin I can remember, and I have got absolution, and I shall have the holy oil when I'm just at the last, mother; but then I must be in the fires of purgatory soon, and you are very poor, mother."

The mother's quick affection caught the meaning of the words, and their painful connection. "Ah, sure, I see it now," she said; "true for us, Mary, we are poor, but I'll work these fingers to the bone, but I'll get money for the masses, that will hasten the passage to heaven. My own Mary, namesake of the blessed Virgin, do you think your poor lonely mother could rest till your soul is safe in glory? No! she'll work by day and pray by night to the Queen of heaven and all the saints for the peace of your soul. So be easy, darling, and don't trouble for the masses any more at all."

"It will be no peace to my soul to know that you have to work hard to get masses said, my own loving mother. That's what makes it harder still to die."

"Sure; but mayhap you'll know nothing about it there, darling; leave that all to the priest now, and

say the prayers to the Virgin he bade you. That'll bring peace to your heart."

"No, it is all dark. I want to know where I am going, and more, a great deal more than the priest would tell me. Mother," she added quickly, "I am thinking often of the death-bed of cousin Kathleen. She had no absolution, no unction, no masses; but she died so happy."

"She was a heretic, Mary, and knew nothing at all, so she died in her sins. Better as you are, dying in the holy faith of the true church, and all her blessed rites, even if you do not feel as happy as poor Kathleen."

"Some words she said come across me now, mother, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' What did she mean? I have no comfort, no staff. I am trembling in the dark, and see only great fires beyond, and am full of fear. Kathleen did not believe in purgatory."

"Hush, now, Mary dear; sickness and pain have turned your mind from the right way; go to sleep and forget her, and trust in the blessed Virgin."

"Well, mother, I'll try, but I can't help thinking it must be a happier thing to go straight to heaven at once. I wish I could remember all Kathleen said about it."

"It's not for the like of us to go straight to heaven at once, Mary; we must go the way the church directs."

"But sure it's a hard way, mother dear; I often fear that some who get into the fires of purgatory may never get out again."

"Now don't be mistrustful of the masses, darling; but if the priest knew all you've been saying, it would go hard for me to pay for so many. So now just leave thinking about it at all, and here's Pat will sit by you awhile, till I run to my work and back"

Pat had come in and overheard part of the conversation, and now sat down by his sister's side with a heavy heart; for the doctor had said she could not recover, and he had travelled from another part of the country to see her before her death.

"Mary," said he, when their mother had left them together, "what was that about cousin Kathleen?"

"Ah, Pat, I was wishing I could die as happy as she did, though it's true she had no absolution nor unction, and didn't believe in purgatory, and thought she was going to heaven at once."

"But you wouldn't wish to die in error and sin, Mary?"

"No; but hush now, and I'll tell you, Pat, that if ever there was an angel on earth, Kathleen was one, and I can't believe that her soul is in hell just because—"

"Because she believed in the blood and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ?" exclaimed Pat; "no, Mary, for that's just the reason she had no need to go there at all; and as for absolution, she had it, and as for unction, she had that too."

"What's this you're telling me? Why sure she was called a heretic, and had no blessing from the hands of the church."

"No, but she got it a quicker way, straight from the hand of the Lord himself. He spoke in her soul, Mary, and comforted her with assurance of his pardon and love. Do you think she needed anybody else to tell her after that? And she had the true 'unction from the Holy One,' and knew all things that made her wise unto salvation; and what need of oils outside after that?"

Mary stared upon her brother with mingled feelings of fear and delight, at last exclaiming, "Sure, brother, you've turned heretic too!"

"Well, never mind that, I don't care for nicknames at all, but I've been reading the Bible, Mary, God's

own blessed book, full of such loving words to poor sinners, as would melt your heart."

"But how did you get it? Does the priest know?"

"Sure, I didn't stop to ask him, but I got it of a 'Reader,' he called himself, and he said that in England every man might read the Bible, if he liked, and the priests—but no, not priests—the pastors of the church there, were always delighted to read to the people out of a poor man's own Bible. And I said to myself, I'm a true loyal subject of the Queen, and why may not I do as her other subjects do, and have a Bible of my own? So I will. And I did; for you know I was a bit of a scholar once. And I read and read, and some things were so pretty, and went so quick to my heart, that I couldn't stop any more if I'm burned for it. But I hav'n't told mother yet."

"Poor mother, it will break her heart," said Mary, with a sigh. "But now, Pat, I'm out of breath with listening to you, for longing to know what it is about purgatory that you've read in the Bible."

"Why, just as much as you see in that empty platter; and that's nothing at all; and I've searched from one end to the other; so make your heart easy, Mary, for you can't go to a place that that there isn't in God's creation. You shall go, and I'll promise you on the faith of the Holy Scriptures, straight to heaven at once, if you'll only do one thing."

"What is it, Pat? Oh, what is there I wouldn't do if I could! Is it to make 'a station?'"

"No, no, not the like of such things as that; but if you'll listen, I'll read it in the beautiful words that they are;"—and drawing from his pocket the precious little volume that had enlightened himself, the young Irishman read, "'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John iii. 16. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised

for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Isa. liii. 5. Mary, do you think the Lord only suffered by halves, and only heals by halves? 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' Isa. lv. 7. Is it 'abundant pardon,' if we go to suffer torments in prison before we get it at all, Mary?"

"Oh, sure, all this is strange to my ear, Pat; but true enough they are beautiful words."

"I'm thinking, Mary, the priest would have said purgatory was a good enough place for the thief on the cross; but Jesus said, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' That's 'absent from the body, present with the Lord.' As he forgave him entirely, so he does now, for 'Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' The Bible says, 'There is now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus.' 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' 'It is Christ that died,' not they that suffered—but Christ died, and be sure that the sin which is laid on him, has never a pang for body or soul of one that believes on him. And what need of an earthly priest, when 'by one offering Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified?' Heb. x. 14.

"'Them that are sanctified,' Pat! what is that? Is it not to be sanctified that we go to purgatory?"

"No: 'For this is the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts;—and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.' Heb. viii. 10, x. 18. No offering of your own sufferings, my Mary; no masses for our mother to pay for. When the blessed

Lord was going to be betrayed, before he was taken prisoner, he prayed for all his people, and in his prayer he said not a word about their going through purgatory, nor getting sanctified in any way but one."

"And what was that?"

"He said, 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.' John xvii. 17. The apostle Paul said, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the word.' Ephes. v. 26. And again, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' Heb. ix. 14. And to the Lord's people at Thessalonica, he said, 'We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' 2 Thess. ii. 13. So, Mary, it is Christ's blood for us, and Christ's word in us; and that is salvation out and out."

"O brother, sure you are sent for a blessing to my dying bed, to tell me these beautiful things, and all so easy and straight, and just as Kathleen used to say. But now, what is the thing I am to do, Pat? You said, if I'd do one thing."

"Why, then it is just this—'Having,' as the precious word says, 'an high priest over the house of God'—that's the Lord Jesus with his one offering of himself once offered—'let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.' Heb. x. 21, 22. You must believe these beautiful things, and that will make them your own. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' (Acts xvi. 31,) now, at once, and, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;' and then you may 'rejoice in hope,' as it says, 'of the glory of God;' for 'being justified by his blood, we shall be saved

from wrath through him.' Rom. v. 1, 2, 9. O Mary, it's all of a piece; it's all like the word of God, worth loving and trusting for ever. Now, can you find in your heart to believe what God says?"

"I'm afraid only that it's too good to be true," said Mary, timidly; "for, Pat, what's the reason the priest does not tell us the same, if it's true?"

"It's true, for it is in the Holy Bible, and God has said it; and the reason the priest does not tell it is plain too, for such words go clean to upset his popish patchwork of absolutions, masses, and purgatory. But, Mary, just leave minding his reasons, and turn to the Lord himself; 'draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith;' it's faith you must have, and not masses, Mary. The offering is made, the blood is shed that must cleanse away all your sins, so that there is nothing to do but to believe in Christ alone."

"Faith, faith—what is it? How shall I get it?"

"Oh, but it's a darling of a book, for it tells that too. 'It is the gift of God.' 'Now faith is the substance'—or, as it says in the margin, 'the ground of confidence—of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Heb. xi. 1. It's just believing that the Lord says true, and will do as he has promised, before you get the thing promised. Sure, Mary dear, you don't think I'd tell you a lie?"

"No, that I do not, the kind brother that you have been to me, it's the soul of truth you always were."

"Then think still higher and better of Christ that died for you: believe what he says at once. But stay—there's a precious help yet; for 'no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost,' (1 Cor. xii. 3,) and he can help you to believe it all. Ask him to teach you. 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' for the Lord said, 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'

Luke xi. 13. Oh, if God gives you his Holy Spirit,—and he will, if you ask him right truly, and earnestly,—then you will see how it is that Jesus his own self is 'all, and in all,' 'wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' (1 Cor i. 30,) to poor lost sinners; and how he who 'knew no sin' was made to be 'sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 2 Cor. v. 21. And then, Mary dear, if indeed you must leave us, if you must not stay any longer here, you will pass without fear through the dark valley, with the staff of truth to lean upon; and your happy spirit 'absent from the body' shall be 'present with the Lord,' for he says it. 2 Cor. v. 8."

"O Pat, Kathleen might well be happy to know all this; but you must say it all over and over again, when mother is not by, for it is taking the thorns from the dying pillow one by one, and I do hope I shall be able to believe it all. But what will the priest say? Perhaps he will curse me for a heretic, Pat." And she shuddered at the thought.

"Oh, but it'll do the most harm to himself then, never fear. Be true, and hold fast by the Lord Jesus and his own words, and you need not fear what man can do."

"And our poor mother, who loves the church and the Virgin, and so many saints, and believes in them all."

"Ah, we must say something now and then out of the Bible, that will catch her ear, and win her heart; and above all, pray to God to enlighten her with the Holy Spirit, that she may know her darling is safe in glory, when we are left lonely by the grave-side. Sure it's a blessed religion to comfort us all, whether living or dying; and I only wish that every man, and woman, and child knew that Jesus died for them, and that for *his* sake God has mercy on them that believe.

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No. 177.

THE VILLAGE CARPENTER.

BY A CANADIAN MERCHANT.

HAVING tarried a few days in a beautiful village in the West, I embarked in a vessel which was crossing one of the great lakes. Three other individuals had taken passage, and night coming on found us waiting for a breeze.

About nine o'clock, as the sails were hoisted, another passenger came on board. When we had cleared the harbour he entered the cabin, and seemed to suppose that he was alone; for we had all retired to our berths. The lamp was burning dimly on the table, but it afforded sufficient light for me to discover that he was young. Seating himself beside it, he drew a book from his pocket and read a few minutes. Suddenly, from on deck, was heard the voice of the captain uttering oaths, terrific beyond description. The youth arose, laid his book on the chair, and kneeling beside it, in a low whisper engaged in prayer. I listened attentively, and, though his soul seemed to burn within him, I could gather only an occasional word, or part of a sentence, such as "mercy," "dying heathen," "sinners," &c. Presently he seemed in an agony of spirit for these swearers, and could scarcely suppress his voice while pleading with God to have mercy on

them. My soul was stirred within me. There was a sacredness in this place, and I was self-condemned, knowing that I also professed the name of Jesus, and had retired with my fellow-passengers to rest, not having spoken with God, or committed myself to his care.

Early in the morning I was awakened by a loud voice at the door of the companion-way,—"Here! whose tracts are these?" followed by other voices in threats and imprecations against tract distributors, Bethels, temperance societies, &c.

I thought of the young stranger, and feared they would execute their threats upon him; but he calmly said, "Those tracts, sir, are mine. I have but a few, as you see, but they are very good, and you may take one if you wish. I brought them on board to distribute, but you were all too busy last night." The sailor smiled and walked away, making no reply.

We were soon called to breakfast with the captain and mate. When we were seated at the table, "Captain," said our young companion, "as the Lord supplies all our wants, if neither you nor the passengers object, I would like to ask his blessing on our repast."

"If you please," replied the captain, with apparent good-will. In a few minutes the cook was on deck, and informed the sailors, who were instantly in an uproar, and their mouths filled with curses. The captain attempted to apologize for the profanity of his men, saying, "It was perfectly common among sailors, and they meant no harm by it."

"With your leave, captain," said the young stranger, "I think we can put an end to it."

Himself a swearer, and having just apologized for his men, the captain was puzzled for an answer; but, after a little hesitation, replied, "I might as well attempt to sail against a head wind as to think of such a thing."

"But I meant all I said," added the young man.

"Well, if you think it possible, you may try it," said the captain.

As soon as breakfast was over, the oldest and most profane of the sailors seated himself on the quarter-deck to smoke his pipe. The young man entered into conversation with him, and soon drew from him a history of the adventures of his life. From his boyhood he had followed the ocean. He had been tossed on the billows in many a tempest; had visited several missionary stations in different parts of the world, and gave his testimony to the good effects of missionary efforts among the natives of the Sandwich Islands. Proud of his nautical skill, he at length boasted that he could do anything that could be done by a sailor.

"I doubt it," said the young man.

"I can," answered the hardy tar, "and will not be outdone, my word for it."

"Well, when a sailor passes his word he ought to be believed. I knew a sailor who resolved that he would stop swearing; and did so."

"Ah!" said the old sailor, "you've anchored me, I'm fast—but I can do it."

"I know you can," said the young man, "and I hope you will anchor all your shipmates' oaths with yours."

Not a word of profanity was afterwards heard on

board the vessel. During the day, as opportunity presented itself, he conversed with each sailor singly on the subject of his soul's salvation, and gained the attention of all.

After supper he requested of the captain the privilege of keeping worship in the cabin. His wishes were complied with, and soon all on board, except the man at the helm, were assembled. The captain brought out a Bible, which he said was given him in early life by his father, with a request that he would never part with it. We listened as our friend read Matthew's account of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection; and then looking round upon us, he said, "He is risen—yes, Jesus lives; let us worship him."

It was a melting scene. Knees that seldom bowed before, now knelt at the altar of prayer, while the solemnities of eternity seemed hanging over us. After prayer we went on deck and sang a hymn. It was a happy place, a *floating Bethel.* Instead of confusion and wrath, there was sweet peace and solemnity. We ceased just as the setting sun was flinging upon us his last cheering rays.

The captain, deeply affected, went into the cabin, lit his lamp, took his Bible, and was engaged in reading until we had retired to rest.

After this, for three days, we regularly attended family worship, and had much interesting conversation on various subjects; for there was nothing in the religion of the young stranger to repress the cheerfulness of social intercourse. From his familiarity with the Bible, his readiness in illustrating its truths, and pre-

senting its motives; and from his fearless but judicious and persevering steps, we concluded that he was a minister of the Gospel. From all he saw, he gathered laurels to cast at his Master's feet, and in all his movements aimed to show that eternity was not to be trifled with. A few hours before we arrived in port we ascertained that he was a *mechanic, a village carpenter.*

Before we reached the wharf the captain came forward, and, with much feeling, bade him farewell; declared that he was resolved to live as he had done no longer—his wife, he said, was a Christian, and he meant to go and live with her; and added, "I have had ministers as passengers on my vessel Sabbath-days and week-days, but never before have I been so touchingly reminded of the family-altar, where my departed parents knelt." As we left the vessel, every countenance showed that our friend had, by his decided, yet mild and Christian faithfulness, won the gratitude of many, and the esteem of all.

We soon found ourselves in a canal boat, where were about thirty passengers, of various ages and characters; and my curiosity was not a little excited to learn how my companion would proceed among them. The afternoon had nearly passed away, and he had conversed with no one but myself. At length he inquired of the captain if he was willing to have prayers on board.

"I have no objection," said he, "if the passengers have not; but *I* shan't attend."

At an early hour the passengers were invited into the cabin, and in a few minutes the captain was seated among them. After reading a short portion of Scrip-

ture, our friend made a few appropriate remarks, and earnestly commended us to God.

As soon as he rose from prayer, a gentleman, whose head was whitening for the grave, said, "Sir, I should like to converse with you. I profess to be a Deist. I once professed religion, but now I believe it is all a delusion."

"Sir," said the young man, "I respect age, and will listen to you; and, as you proceed, may, perhaps, ask a few questions; but I cannot debate; I can only say, that I *must* love Jesus Christ. He died to save me, and I am a great sinner."

"I do not deny that men are sinners," said the old man; "but I don't believe in Christ."

"Will you, then, tell us how sinners can be saved in some other way, and God's law be honoured?"

We waited in vain for a reply, when my friend proceeded:—"Not many years since I was an infidel because I did not love the truth, and was unwilling to examine it. Now I see my error; and the more I study the Bible, the firmer is my conviction of its truth; and that there is no way of salvation but through a crucified Redeemer."

As the passengers sat engaged in conversation, one of them at length turned to our young friend, and related the circumstances of a murder recently perpetrated by a man in the neighbourhood, while in a fit of intoxication. To this all paid the strictest attention. The captain joined them to hear the story, the conclusion of which afforded an opportunity for the stranger to begin his work. He was the advocate of

temperance as well as religion, and here gained some friends to this cause.

"But," said he at length, "though intoxication occasions an immense amount of crime and misery in our world, I recollect one instance of murder with which it had no connection." He then related, as nearly as I can remember, the following story:

"In a populous city of the East, was a man who seemed to live only for the good of others. He daily exhibited the most perfect benevolence towards his fellow-men; sought out the poor and needy, and relieved their wants; sympathized with and comforted the sick and the afflicted; and, though he was rich, his unsparing beneficence clothed him in poverty. He deserved the esteem of all, yet he had enemies. He took no part in politics, yet many feared that his generosity was a cloak of ambition, and that he was making friends in order to secure to himself the reins of government. Others feared that his religious views, connected with his consistent life, would expose their hypocrisy. At length a mock trial was held by an infuriated mob, and he was condemned and put to death."

"Where was that?"—"When was it?"—"Who was it?" was heard from several voices.

"It was in the city of Jerusalem, and the person was none other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST. By his enemies he was hung upon the cross, and for us, guilty sinners, he died."

Every eye was fixed upon the young man, and a solemn awe rested on every countenance. He opened a Bible which lay upon the table, and read the account

of Christ's condemnation and death; the captain nodded to him as a signal for prayer, and we all again fell on our knees, while he wept over the condition of sinners, and, for the sake of Christ, besought God's mercy upon them. Here again was a floating Bethel.

In the morning the stranger was not forgotten; and he evidently did not forget that there were immortal souls around him, hastening with him to the bar of God. During the day he conversed separately with each individual, except an elderly gentleman, who had followed him from seat to seat, and showed much uneasiness of mind; the realities of eternity were set before us, and the Holy Spirit seemed to be striving with many hearts.

As the mantle of evening was drawing around us, our friend requested an interview with the aged man.

"Yes, yes," he said, "I have been wishing all day to see you, but you were talking with others."

He acknowledged that he had tried to be a Universalist; and, though he could not rest in that belief, he never, until the previous evening, saw his lost condition. "And now," said he, "I want you to tell me what I shall do."

The young man raised his eyes to heaven, as if imploring the Spirit's influences; and then briefly explained the nature and reasonableness of repentance and faith, accompanied by a few striking illustrations in proof of the justice of God in condemning, and his mercy in pardoning sinners.

The old man saw the plan of redemption so clearly, that he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Oh, my soul,

my soul! How have I sinned against God! I see it —I feel it; yes, I have sinned all my days."

"But Jesus died to save sinners," replied the young man; "will you, my friend, give him your heart?"

"O yes, yes! if I had a thousand he should have them all," was the answer.

The young man turned away and wept. For some minutes silence was broken only by the deep sighs of the aged penitent. There was something, in an hour like this, awfully solemn. Heaven was rejoicing, I doubt not, over a returning prodigal. As he stood alone and wept, he reiterated again and again, "Yes, I will serve God; I will, I will." After a time his feelings became more calm, and lifting his eyes towards heaven, with both hands raised, he broke out in singing:—

"There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

And then again he wept and said, "Yes, O Jesus, precious Saviour!"

The time had come for our young friend to leave us. By his zeal in his Master's service he had stolen our hearts, and all pressed forward to express their friendship in an affectionate farewell.

Such was the influence of one individual, whose unwavering purpose it was to *live* for God. He felt for dying sinners; and relying on the help of the Holy Spirit for success, laboured for the salvation of souls around him. Will not the reader solemnly resolve, in God's strength, that henceforth, *whether at home or*

abroad, he will make the glory of Christ, in the salvation of men, the one object of his life? When Christians universally shall do this, we may expect soon to hear the song of Zion float on every breeze: "Alleluia! The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

THE SWEARER REBUKED BY A CHILD.

It was a railway excursion day, and the carriages were nearly full, when a lady, evidently in ill health, entered, leading a little son of four or five years. She paused and looked around in vain for a vacant seat. The gentleman by my side, perceiving her embarrassment, sprang to his feet, and politely offered his seat, which was accepted with a grateful acknowledgment. She was about to take the little boy in her arms, when a gentleman on the opposite side extended his hands, saying, with a winning smile, "Come here, my boy, come and sit down upon my knee. I am better able to hold you than your mother is." The child looked up for his mother's consent, and then joyfully sprang to the seat so kindly offered. For some few moments, the gentleman amused himself by asking the child all manner of questions, drawing out his curious ideas, and listening with satisfaction to his artless replies. Soon, however, his attention was drawn to an article in the paper he had just laid aside, and giving the boy some sweetmeats, he entered into an earnest political discussion with another gentleman by his side. At first, it seemed they only sought amusement, and jokes and

laughter were frequently intermingled with argument. But the contest gradually waxed stronger, until at length jokes were exchanged for profanity.

The boy had been very happy with his new friend, but when the first profane word was uttered, he looked up with astonishment. Tears gathered in his large black eyes, and laying the watch carefully aside, which had been given to him by the gentleman for his amusement, he slipped quietly to the floor, and fled to his mother.

"Where are you going, my dear?" exclaimed the gentleman, as he saw him moving off. "Come back, my boy, come back, I thought you were very happy, a few moments since; what is the matter now? Come, you are a fine little fellow, come and see what I can find for you in my pocket." But the boy clung to his mother, utterly refusing the extended hand.

"Well, now," exclaimed the gentleman, with evident chagrin, "this is very strange. I do not understand it. Come, my boy, tell me why you left me?"

"Tell the gentleman, my dear," said his mother, encouragingly, "why you do not wish to sit with him."

"Because," said he, as he straightened himself back, and summoned all his resolution for the effort, "the Bible says we must not sit in the seat of the scorner."

The gentleman looked confounded. For a moment, the blood rushed to his high expansive brow, and I thought he was angry. The mother was also surprised. She had not expected such a reply. But the man instantly regained his composure, and pleasantly said, "I hope you do not call me a scorner." The boy leaned his head upon his mother's shoulder, but made no reply. "Come, tell me," continued he, "why do

you call me a scorner?" The child looked up, and simply, but earnestly said, while a large tear stole quietly down his cheek, "I don't like, sir, to hear you swear so."

"Oh! that is it, is it? Well," continued he, as the mother pressed her son to her bosom, and bowed her head to hide the tears which were starting in her own eyes; "come back and sit with me, and I promise you I will never swear again."

"Won't you?" asked the child, earnestly, "then I shall love you very much indeed!" Saying this, he allowed the gentleman again to place him on his knee; but it was plainly to be seen that he did not go back with the joyfulness with which he had at first taken the seat. The gentleman saw this. He felt that he had lowered himself in the esteem of that innocent and noble-minded boy. The thought evidently gave him pain. And he did all he could to efface from his mind the unpleasant impression.

In explanation of this affecting scene, his mother said it was her custom to read a chapter in the Bible every morning to her son, explaining it as she could, and then pray with him. That morning she had read the first Psalm, and when explaining to him the character of a scorner, among other vices, she had mentioned profanity. Not fully comprehending the subject, but resolved at all events to do right, he thought it was really a sinful act to sit for one moment with a man who had taken God's name in vain. When, oh when, will mothers realize the vast amount of influence they are capable of exerting over their children? When will they realize the strength and permanence of those impressions received in childhood?

No. 178.

CHRISTIAN VIEWS

OF

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

It is all-important that we should have a correct understanding of the nature of the work which God has given us to do, *as members of his church*, with reference to the spread of the gospel. We ought to know in what way, and to what extent, our agency is to be employed in the accomplishment of his purposes of grace and mercy to the children of men. We ought not to attempt what is impracticable, and has not been required of us;—nor are we to expect what has not been promised. The erroneous opinions which have been entertained on this subject, and the unguarded sentiments which have been uttered respecting it, have, to some extent, injured the cause of foreign missions. It has been regarded by some as a romantic enterprise, as an experiment, as a work of its own sort, differing essentially from every department of labour in which Christians are called to engage. The sacrifices required of those who have given themselves to the church as foreign missionaries, have been exaggerated. They are great, and, in some respects, peculiar; but they are equally required of all the followers of Christ. Missionaries are not to be regarded as a different order of beings from ourselves, nor as under any higher obligations to spend and be spent for Christ, than we are. There is nothing gained by indulging an extravagant sentimentalism on this subject; whilst we may, by investing the enterprise

with what does not belong to it, deter some from engaging in it.

We must also avoid extreme opinions respecting the agency by which it is to be accomplished. On the one hand, there are some who persuade themselves that it is so entirely the work of God, that we have nothing to do in it; that if he will have the heathen saved, he will save them; and at the appointed time he will give them to Christ by a miracle, if necessary, and that therefore we may sit still. On the other hand, there are those who go far beyond the promise of God; who speak of the conversion of the world as a work which has been given us to do, for which we are responsible; as if it were to be the natural result of human agency, as of cause and effect—the necessary and inseparable fruit of means used, irrespective of the will and power of God. It becomes us, therefore, to take a plain, practical, common-sense, and scriptural view of the subject, in order that we may not be disappointed, that we may not be discouraged, and that there may be no cause of reproach. That which we are called to do as Christians, is not to convert the world, nor absolutely to save souls. To do this, is the prerogative of God, as much as it was to create the world. But we are called to be co-workers with him, as instruments, in the accomplishment of this work. We are to furnish the destitute with the means of salvation, to impart to them the good which we have received. We are to disseminate that which is the wisdom of God and the power of God, unto salvation to every one that believes,—and we are responsible for our *fidelity*, as stewards of the mysteries of God, for preaching the gospel to every creature as far as may be practicable—and for warning every man, and teaching every man the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, as we may have opportunity; but we are not responsible for our success, for the *issue* of the missionary enterprise, for the *salvation of immortal souls*.

We are not taught in the Bible to expect, that wherever the gospel is preached, every man, woman, and child, will immediately embrace it; but that God has a redeemed people, to be gathered together in one, out of every kindred and nation, and people and tongue; that wherever the gospel is preached, those who were ordained unto eternal life believe it, whilst others reject it,—"many are called, but few are chosen;" and that this state of things will continue to the end of time. As there have been from the beginning, so there will be, unbelievers, opposers, and scoffers in the world—and so there will be tares in the church until the harvest of the world. The practical mistake of some on this subject, has had the effect to discourage those who laboured under it, and to embolden infidelity. Because immediate and universal success has not in every instance attended missionary labour among the heathen, some have considered the effort to save them as useless, or have concluded that the time for their redemption had not come; whilst infidels have said, The promises of God will never be fulfilled. We must remember, that the progress of the gospel is slow, every where, and under the most favourable circumstances. It meets with opposition in nominally Christian lands, and especially have we reason to expect that it will meet with opposition, and be slow in producing its legitimate effects, in heathen lands. It requires a series of years to rescue the heathen mind from its bondage to corruption, ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and its consequent deep degradation, and to elevate it to the common level of minds which have been trained up in the merely speculative knowledge of God. We must remember, also, that the result of missionary labour depends on the blessing of God: Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but God must give the increase.

Whilst it is true that God only can quicken the dead in trespasses and in sins; that every instance of conversion is

the effect of divine power, and that therefore we cannot save souls; yet, at the same time, it is not less true that there is much that we can do,—there is a wide field for our exertions. The heathen must be made acquainted with the revelation which God has given us of himself, as the Creator and Preserver of all things, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a just God and a Saviour. They must be taught his law, the history of man's creation, fall, and redemption; and be put in possession of the record of eternal life, which has been given us in Christ Jesus. The sacred scriptures must be translated into the different languages of the nations and tribes of the earth; printed and circulated, and made accessible to all. Teachers must be sent to them; schools must be established among them; that they may be taught to read in their own native tongue the wonderful works of God. Ministers of the gospel must be sent to expound the sacred scriptures faithfully, and directly to preach Christ and him crucified. The same work substantially which has been done among ourselves,—which is done in all new settlements,—must be done in the dark places of the earth which are full of the habitations of cruelty. And this is a work which requires study, self-denial, labour, great sacrifices, the contribution of pecuniary means, and prayer. Here is room for our agency. It is our province to provide, and faithfully to apply all the means which are necessary, and which are ordinarily blessed of God to bring sinners to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth according to godliness.

We are not, however, to send the gospel to the heathen merely as a witness against them; nor should we feel that when we have, as hirelings, furnished them with the means of salvation, our work is accomplished, and that the issue is a matter of indifference to us. As *Christians*, we cannot feel indifferent. Though we are not responsible for their salvation, yet our hearts' desire and prayer to God

for them will be, that they may be saved. We are to remind them that the gospel will be a witness against them if they reject it; that it will not only leave them without excuse, but will aggravate their condemnation if they die in their sins, under the preaching of it. All that we do in their behalf, must be done with a view of *winning* them to Christ, that they may be to the praise of the glory of his grace. We should lose all our recompense, and render ourselves offensive in the sight of God, if we were to act towards them without love for their souls. We are taught by the very *words* which are used in the sacred scriptures to express our duty, with what spirit, and in what manner we are to perform it. We are not to attempt to take them by surprise, to overreach or entrap them, to overpower or to compel them by force, to embrace our religion. We are not rudely to assault them, attacking them with violence; we are not to abuse, to denounce, nor to command them, as by authority, in an arbitrary and dictatorial manner; but to *win* them, to convince them by argument, to persuade by the consideration of the motives which the gospel furnishes —to draw them with the cords of love, and with the bands of a man. We must exercise towards them *meekness*, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, and forbearance, speaking the truth in love. In all that we do for them, we must breathe the spirit of the gospel, and imitate the example of Christ. This surely is more than to give to them the gospel as a *witness* against them.

We may observe in the next place, that it is a great work, which God has given us to do, and one encompassed with many difficulties. There are millions to be reached, and to be brought under the influence of the gospel. They are widely scattered, inhabiting different climates, not all salubrious; speaking a variety of languages and dialects; all in a state of moral ignorance, and spiritual darkness;

exceedingly superstitious; wholly given to idolatry; having the natural enmity of their carnal minds greatly increased by their social and civil relations, and by their sinful practices, by their systems of caste, by *family connections*, and by the wretched *substitutes* for true religion which they have adopted. They are mentally enslaved and deeply degraded, strongly prejudiced, and in every way fortified against the reception of the gospel. Again, the apparent weakness and inadequacy of the means by which they are to be reclaimed and regenerated; the indifference and apathy of the church, with respect to the missionary enterprise; the small number of those who seem to care for the heathen; and the still smaller number who are willing to go to them as preachers and teachers, add to the difficulty of the work, and are sources of great discouragement. Yet this was the work which occupied the divine mind from eternity; which was worthy of the deliberate counsels and eternal decrees of Jehovah; which was contemplated by the Son of God, in his amazing act of condescension, and in all the steps of his humiliation, to secure the accomplishment of which, he endured all his sufferings, his agony in the garden, and his accursed death on the cross. We know also, that it is a work intimately connected with the highest glory of God, being intended to manifest his perfections, and with the best interests of men; and that it is practicable, for it is to be done, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." When we have done all that we can do, in a way of providing and faithfully applying the means by which it is to be accomplished, we may pray for the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, to give effect to those means.

The obligation to engage in this work, rests equally upon all who have found Christ for themselves, who have received the grace of God, and have been saved. It cannot

without sin be devolved on a few missionaries; nor on the ministers of the gospel; nor on the agents of our benevolent associations; nor on those who have the management of the benevolent operations of the church. The church is herself to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth. She is the appointed teacher of the world, and as such she must let her light shine, and hold forth the word of life. This was the design of their organization. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." Every individual member of the church has been enlightened and quickened, not for himself alone, but that he may tell others what the Lord has done for his soul; that he may labour to promote the common salvation, and pray that the kingdom of Christ may come, and his will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. All have not the same gifts; all are not qualified, nor called to go in person to the heathen; all cannot contribute the same amount of means for the spread of the gospel; but whatever is proper for a missionary to do, or whatever is expected of him, in a way of *self-denial*, of *making sacrifices*, and of offering unceasing prayer for the conversion of the heathen, is equally obligatory on every Christian.

We may remark here, that the distinction which is made between Home and Foreign Missions, does not refer to the *nature* of the work, nor to our obligations. There is a difference in the *circumstances* of the objects to be benefitted, and there may be a difference as to the urgency of their necessities; but there is no difference in the duty we owe to them. The destitute at home and abroad are both our neighbours, whom we are bound to love as ourselves. If we are Christians, we are the servants of God, and owe him allegiance. We are to be his witnesses every where. We are, as good soldiers, to endure hardness, and to obey orders, and to feel that we are not our own. We must go wherever we may be called, and do whatever may be re-

quired of us. Those who may be called to labour among the heathen, speaking a different tongue, will find their work in some respects more arduous and more difficult at first, for they must acquire a new language; but they are doing the same work essentially to which all Christians are called, and must walk by the same rule. Those, therefore, who say that they are in favour of Home Missions, but not of Foreign, say in effect that they decline a part of the work to which God has called them; that they love one neighbour at their door, but not another more distant, and who is in more need of their aid; that they are willing to follow Christ, whilst he leads them where they wish to go, but no farther. They have not yielded themselves unreservedly to God, asking in sincerity, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It is true, that we cannot love all who are our neighbours alike; we cannot do all the good we would to all who might be benefitted by us; we are finite creatures, limited as to our faculties and abilities, and restricted in our operations. We owe peculiar duties to our families, to our own churches, and to the community of which we are members. This is according to the wise and merciful constitution of God. But it is also true, that if we have the mind and spirit of Christ, we shall desire to do good to all without respect of persons; and according to the measure of our ability, we will actually do good to all, as we have opportunity. We shall desire to give the bread of life to all whom we can reach, to those who are afar off, and to those who are nigh. We shall pray and labour for the salvation of the destitute at home, and for the heathen abroad. Their claims are not to be denied on account of their distance from us. Our obligations cannot be cancelled by space, which may be compassed, or even annihilated. Already are the most distant heathen within a few months' sailing of us; whilst others are at our very door. Through the arrangements which have been made

by the church, and in the good providence of God, we can as easily benefit the one as the other.

We may inquire more particularly, Why should we engage in this work? We have thus far taken for granted that God requires it, and that it is for his glory. Let us now consider some of the obligations we are under to engage in it.

It is the *Command of our Lord*, that we should go into all the world, and teach all nations; that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached to every creature.

God from the beginning gave intimations of his designs of mercy to the Gentiles, and that the light which he communicated to the children of men was not to be put under a bushel; that his knowledge and grace were not to be monopolized by those who received them. He never intended that those to whom he revealed himself, and made known his purposes of grace to the children of men, should preserve that revelation as a *profound secret*. Abraham and the patriarchs were not shut up in cloisters, buried in deep dens and caverns, to prevent them from holding communion with the rest of the world; but they went about, sojourning among different tribes, that God might be made known through them. Doubtless there were other ends to be accomplished in the complicated providence of God, in permitting their manner of life; in allowing Joseph to be sold into Egypt, and the children of Israel to be brought there; in sending Moses to deliver them; and subsequently, in permitting the whole nation to be carried into captivity into Babylon; but can we not perceive how God, by all these methods, made himself known among the heathen? He permitted the Gentiles, for wise purposes, to make trial of their own wisdom, and the Jews to develope their character, to prepare for the introduction of the *Gospel dispensation;* but this was not

inconsistent with his mind and will, which have been ever the same respecting the diffusion of his knowledge. The church never had a more favourable opportunity of making known Jehovah to the nations of the earth, than she had under the Old Testament dispensation. She was great, she was *powerful*, and exerted a commanding influence among the nations; but she yielded to that selfishness which is satisfied when its own ends are answered, and which it is the design of God, by his grace, to counteract. She abused her opportunity, she failed to accomplish the high purpose of the dispensation which had been given to her, and God rebuked her. Having seen all this, having been warned by their example, as well as *expressly* in the *word* of God; and having received the positive command of our risen Redeemer, just before his ascension, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, our duty has been most clearly revealed, and our responsibility in this respect has been proportionably increased. We have the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the promises of the New; we have the command of Christ, the example of the apostles, and the spirit of the gospel, to direct us to engage in this work.

It is conceded by all to be the duty of ministers to preach Christ and him crucified every where, that men may every where repent and believe, in obedience to the command of God; but ministers cannot go unless they are sent. It is the duty therefore of the church, of Christians who constitute the church, to send them. The apostle has placed the respective duties of ministers and of people to the heathen, in a clear light. He declares the general and glorious truth, that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," and asks, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom

they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

God will now have all men everywhere to repent. He has given the heathen to his Son for his inheritance; and has assured us that all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. And now he says unto all who have received his salvation, Freely ye have received, freely give.

Obedience to this command is enforced by the consideration that *the heathen are lost.*

They are without the knowledge of the true God; and our Saviour hath said, "This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." They are idolaters. They retain their religious feelings, their sense of dependence, of their wants and exposure; but they are ignorant of the character of the Being on whom they depend, who alone can supply their wants, and who is the only proper object of worship. They conceive of the Supreme Being as if he were fallible, subject to infirmities, and agitated by human passions. They are still more ignorant of the will of God than of his nature. They know not what he requires, nor in what he delights; hence their offerings to their deities are childish and vain, and their worship is debasing and degrading. Their conscience is evil and defiled; if it acts at all, it acts as a false and erring guide. They are ignorant of the law by which conscience is to be regulated, and according to which it is to judge. They are ignorant of themselves, of their origin, their state and relations, their character and destiny. They know not the chief good, nor the source of it. They are unholy and impure, and it is written, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Their souls, in this state of ignorance and bond-

age to sin, are under a blight. Their moral powers are paralyzed and perverted; nor can they ever raise themselves from their spiritual death. There are no redeeming nor conservative principles in their constitution, to work any moral reformation They have no self-recuperative power. There has never been a single instance of reformation from heathenism, and deliverance from the love and power of sin, without the instrumentality of the gospel. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." The name of Jesus is "the only name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved," and how can any be saved who know not that name?

I know that this is an awful truth, and the reception of it occasions the severest trial of our faith. The thought that so many thousands and millions have perished and are perishing, is overwhelming; many cannot entertain it for a moment, and have speculated about the possibility of God's revealing himself to them, and of saving them in some other way than through faith in Christ: but after all, here are the *facts!* God commands us to give them the gospel, because they are lost. When we go to them with the gospel, we find them lost and condemned already; not by the written law which they have not known, nor for their unbelief of what they have never heard, but condemned for the abuse of the light which they have, and by the law of their own conscience. They are without excuse for their atheism and stupid idolatry.

Another reason why we should give them the gospel is, because it is an infallibly *efficacious remedy* for all their spiritual maladies, and the only remedy.

The appeal in their behalf is made to our humanity, to our mercy. We have that book which alone contains the knowledge which is saving, the knowledge of God, of his

counsels, and of his will; the knowledge of our sinfulness, and the cause of it; the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, of his atonement and righteousness; the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the quickener, the immediate author of all spiritual life; the knowledge of the immortality of the soul; of the judgment; of future retribution; of the resurrection; and of eternity. It is this which makes the word of God as a light shining in a dark place; which makes it the sword of the Spirit, and also as a fire and as a hammer, to break the rock in pieces, and to sit as a refiner. But especially is it made powerful by the benevolence which it reveals. The love of God, in giving his only begotten Son; the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich; the love of the Spirit in wooing souls to Christ; these give power to the gospel as a means to convert sinners. It is difficult to resist the influence of goodness; and this is the influence which must be brought to bear upon the poor heathen. By no other means can we savingly benefit them. But this influence is peculiar to the gospel, and is exerted exclusively through its instrumentality.

The gospel, too, proclaims liberty to the captive, the opening of the prison door to them that are bound; it brings to light the souls that were in darkness, and releases them that were in bondage, making them free with the liberty of the sons of God: and shall we withhold it from them?

Another reason why we should give them the gospel is, because we cannot confer on them *a greater benefit*.

It is a spiritual, not a physical, benefit; an eternal, not a temporal, benefit; it respects the soul, and not the body merely. The soul is of infinite value, and is our all; wealth, honours, pleasures, kingdoms, worlds, are all of

no value in comparison with the soul. We can give nothing in exchange for it. The redemption of it is precious, and it ceases for ever; the price of it is not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot. The souls of the heathen are lost, as we have said; they retain their capacities for suffering and for enjoying, and they are immortal; but they have lost their spiritual life, have ceased to act appropriately, and are in ruins; yet they still act. If they are not recovered, their immortality will prove their greatest curse. Through the instrumentality of the gospel, they may be restored to the image of God, and be reinstated in his favour. The salvation which is offered through Jesus Christ, is the primary, vital, essential, and paramount blessing which they need; including all other benefits, and without which their possession of all other things can be of no permanent benefit. If we would civilize the heathen, enrich them, place them in the most prosperous circumstances in this world, give them good laws, and erect them into flourishing communities, *without* the Gospel, and withholding from them salvation, it would be a small benefit in view of their frail and mortal state here, and of their immortality and accountability beyond the grave. But this would be scarcely practicable. Civilization, the introduction of the arts, and the establishment of good government among a people, are the fruits of missionary enterprise, and have seldom been enjoyed without the influence of the gospel. They must learn from the gospel their civil, social, and religious relations, and the duties of those relations. They must, from the same source, learn their rights as men, and their privileges as redeemed sinners. It alone can furnish them with a true and correct standard of morals and of piety, a perfect rule of duty; by it their sentiments will be corrected and elevated, their affections purified, and their state and character improved.

These, however, are only the incidental benefits, the necessarily attending consequences, of the introduction of the gospel. These are the secondary and subservient, not the primary and permanent objects of disseminating the word of life. That which is contemplated by it is the salvation of souls, their renovation, sanctification, and transformation into the likeness of God. Can any benefit be compared with this, the light and life, the peace and joy, the pure spiritual and eternal happiness of immortal souls? This is a good which will not perish with the using, but will abide for ever; which will not cloy by its enjoyment, but will be enhanced and increased the more it is realized throughout eternity.

Again; we should engage in the work of spreading the gospel, on account of *the peculiar and abundant recompense* which is connected with it.

It is our most appropriate work as new creatures in Christ Jesus, and that to which we are prompted by the *spirit* and *principles* of the gospel. If we have the spirit and mind of Christ, it will be our life to have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way; to go about doing good; and to labour for the salvation of the lost. It will be the source of our purest and highest enjoyments. In keeping the commandments of God, there is great reward; obedience to his will is attended with a satisfied heart, an approving conscience, and the enjoyment of his favour, which is life, and of his loving-kindness, which is better than life. We thus promote our own best spiritual interests, our growth in grace, by the exercise of Christian sympathy, and of the gracious affections which we have received. In watering others, our own souls shall be watered. Those who are much engaged in praying for the spread of the gospel, and for the coming of Christ's kingdom, will enjoy more and more of the immunities of

that kingdom; will become more and more spiritually-minded; and have more and more peace and joy in believing. It is thus we are to show forth the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath translated us from darkness to light—by our own consistent, faithful, zealous, and devoted Christian life, and by making known his name and his great salvation to others. Though we should not be permitted to see any fruit of our labour, yet if we be followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises; if we are doing that for which patriarchs, prophets, and apostles lived, and for which martyrs died; if we are fellow servants with angels, and co-workers with the Son of God, in accomplishing instrumentally the eternal purposes and gracious designs of heaven; we may know that our work of faith and labour of love will not be in vain in the Lord. If we should be successful, we shall receive the blessing of them that were ready to perish, and the lasting gratitude of the redeemed; we shall enjoy the high and holy satisfaction arising from the reflection, that we have been instrumental in saving souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. The happiness derived from this source will not be lost, nor diminished at death; it will be eternal, and will be increased in the future world. There we shall spend eternity in company with those whose benefactors we have been through grace, and will be regarded as such by them; and in the presence of the Lamb, our common Lord and Redeemer: "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever." Oh! when we think of the mass of mind which is now dead, and lost to God, and which may be recovered and quickened into life; of the multitudes from whom God *now* receives no homage nor praise, by whom his law is transgressed, and his name is blasphemed, but who might be enlisted in his service, and be brought into communion with him, in subservience to his glory; have we not sufficient reason, yea,

the strongest motive that we can have, to give them the word of life? How desirable and how important is it, that Christians should be trained to this work, and be made to understand and to feel that it is their highest honour and greatest privilege to engage in it! God permits them in this way to do what he has himself been doing from the beginning; to make known his perfections, to show mercy, to exercise benevolence, to do good without respect of persons, even as he causeth his rain to descend, and his sun to shine on the evil and on the good; to increase the amount of human happiness; and by so doing, he permits them also to improve their own character, to purify their own hearts, to exercise and strengthen their gracious affections, to counteract their selfishness, and to come more and more under the attractive, constraining, and transforming influence of the love of Christ.

That the members of our churches may be made willing to engage cordially and cheerfully in this work, not from any fitful and transient emotion, not from any momentary impulse, but from conviction, from an intelligent sense of duty, is greatly to be desired. They should therefore have line upon line, be faithfully instructed as to their duty, and be regularly called upon by personal application for their contributions to promote this cause, according to their several ability.

Those who are qualified to be missionaries, and who might go as such if they were willing, should decide the question of their duty in the fear of God; and all who are qualified and willing to go, should be sent.

Those who cannot go themselves, and who have neither silver nor gold to give for the object, can pray for its success.

I do not forget that there are other benevolent objects which claim our support. They are all kindred objects,

between which and this there can be no rivalry, nor interference; nay, by promoting this we promote them all, as it contemplates them all, and as it increases the spirit of piety and of pure benevolence. It induces and strengthens the habit of communicating and of doing good. The spirit of missions is the spirit of Christ; the more we have of it, the stronger and more efficient does the church become to accomplish the end of her organization. It is well known that the largest contributors for the support of Foreign Missions, are generally the most liberal supporters of the gospel at home, and the warmest friends of Domestic Missions. They are the patrons of the Bible, Tract, and Sunday School Societies, and of all good works. We need not fear, therefore, lest we might, by pressing this claim, exhaust the resources of the church. Thus far we have been able to reach but a small proportion of them.

Let me say, in conclusion, that we need *faith* to enable us to perform this work acceptably, comfortably, and with any prospect of success. We must believe that the heathen are *lost*. The secret thought that they are not, or that they may be saved without the gospel, prevents exertion, and paralyzes our efforts. Again, we must have full confidence in the efficacy of the Gospel, as the divinely appointed means of salvation. We must believe, also, that God requires us to give the gospel to the heathen; that it is not an enterprise *originating* in human philanthropy, or human wisdom. It is not an experiment of doubtful issue, but the work of God, to which he calls us, and which he can and has graciously promised to render successful. He can overcome all difficulties, and remove all obstacles. He can find missionaries, provide means, and render successful the apparently feeble instrumentality employed to bring in the latter-day glory; yet he will not do all this without the agency, exertions, and prayers of his people. He has

made men and women willing to leave their country, their home, their churches, and all the endearments of social life, to go far hence to the Gentiles; and he has enabled parents and friends to part with them. He has made some to feel that the silver and gold were *his*, and that it was more blessed to give than to receive; and he has permitted us to see some of the results of missionary labours. The sacred Scriptures have been translated into more than one hundred different languages; many Christian churches have been organized; a very large number of schools has been established; and multitudes of the heathen have been converted. The same convictions of sin, the same breathings after God, the same hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the same conflicts, the same aspirations after heaven, and the same consolations which we have experienced, have been felt by the converted heathen. We must believe, moreover, as we are taught by divine inspiration, that these are only the first fruits of the whole ingathering of the heathen, who have been given to Christ for his inheritance, and of the uttermost parts of the earth, which are to be his possession. In view of what has been done, we may bless God, and take courage. But we must remember, that much more remains to be accomplished, requiring the warm sympathy, the cordial co-operation, the united and untiring exertions, and the fervent prayers of the whole church.

A MISSION AN AGGRESSIVE EXPEDITION.

Now, there is one idea which we have been endeavouring almost in vain to impress upon the minds of most people in this country—though there are some minds to which it is not new—and it is this, that a real mission to the heathen is, from its very nature, a militant aggressive expedition, so to speak, into an enemy's territory. The whole world, as we profess to believe, is lying in wickedness. It has been rebelliously usurped and occupied by Satan as his special domain; and one grand object of the Son of God, in coming into the world, was to expel the usurper, and rescue the captives from his cruel grasp. The Redeemer has now ascended to the right hand of Majesty on high, but he has committed to those who profess to be his followers the grand and glorious work of carrying on his mighty design of this world's conquest, even until it be consummated. By every figure and emblem which even inspiration could select, we know that Christianity is meant to be aggressively outspreading until it has filled the globe. It is compared to a fountain opened in the house of David and the city of Jerusalem, which is to send forth its waters till its waves have rolled over and fertilized every land; or to a tree, which is to grow and send forth its roots till the branches have overshadowed the nations. Now, then, the law of the kingdom is that of growth and progress; and what we maintain is, that whether it be in the soul of an individual man, or in the body of a collective church, if we try to arrest its growth and outspreading, or, in other words, if we try to keep the good we have acquired to ourselves, we will find that if there be truth in the Bible, and faithfulness in the God of heaven, that church and that individual will begin to droop, and wither, and decay; and finally lose what has been attained to, for they are then manifestly fighting against an eternal law of God.—*Dr. Duff's Speech, before the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Oct.* 11, 1855.

No. 179.

IS JESUS THE MESSIAH?

Leila Ada, the author of the following letter, was the only daughter of A. T., Esq., a wealthy Israelite of Cornwall, England. She was led to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah promised to her fathers, and to embrace him as her God and Saviour, through the reading of the New Testament, accompanied with earnest prayer to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for light and comfort.

Having herself become acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus, she wept as she thought of the darkness which still surrounded her dear father; she felt that her Christianity, and, indeed, every natural feeling was involved, if she made no effort to induce him to renounce Judaism. But how was she to proceed? To obtain an answer to this question cost her much mental agony. To her father she was tenderly devoted, and she knew that he was a strict believer in the faith of his fathers; and, therefore, all the prejudices of his mind would be strongly against her Christianity. To the present period in her life he had never once spoken to her with a look or tone of displeasure, and she had at no time crossed his

will, nor done anything to which he would not give permission; but God was with her, and through the fortitude of Christian principle, she was enabled to dare the worst. And unquestionably, if we reflect a moment upon the Jewish character, we shall perceive that she had *cause* to fear not a little.

Of the means taken by Leila, she thus remarks in her diary:—

"I have this night laid a letter on my father's dressing-table; in it I have detailed the change which has taken place in my soul; in it I have avowed my belief in Jesus of Nazareth, and the joy and peace which I experience in believing. O, that it may do him the good I ardently pray for—that it may lead him to embrace the Gospel of Christ. I have committed it to God; I leave it in thy hands, O my Father; bless it I beseech thee. This whole night do I intend to devote to special wrestling with thee, for the salvation of my dear father.

"And now, I beseech thee, be thou my helper. Choose thou for me my future portion; be my inheritance, calm my agitated spirit; have I not committed the event to thee? O, be with me on the morrow, when I shall be questioned respecting the hope that is in me; do thou be *very* present with me, and enable me to speak as becomes a temple of the living God. May I be saved from bringing any disgrace or disrepute upon the religion of Jesus—that divine cause which now possesses my heart. May my feet be firmly fixed upon the rock Christ Jesus; and then, whatever shall occur, whether I live or die, I shall be happy—for I shall be the Lord's.

"It is with gratitude I record that my soul is impressed with a sense of the divine presence and love. I can rejoice in the blessed conviction that my Beloved is *mine*, and I am *his!*—I have a *present* salvation. Blissful hopes—animating prospects are before me. Whatever results happen to me, temporally, may my soul but enjoy the presence of God, and all will be well. O, my Father, baptize me largely, and still more largely, with the hallowing influences of thy Holy Spirit; this will renovate my nature, and cleanse the very thoughts of my heart. This is what I want—*inward holiness*—to be holy as thou hast called me to be.

LEILA'S LETTER TO HER FATHER.

THE letter to which Leila refers, we shall give in full: it breathes the spirit of filial piety and love, and is at once a fine proof of her good sense, and an ornament to the religion she professed:—

"My very, *very* dear Father:—Do you love me? O, how plainly I hear you say, 'How can my dear daughter ask me this question? Has she not had proofs of my affection again and again? Does she not know that she is dearer to me than all the world besides?' But, my very dear father, do you love me?—do you love me? Yes, I know that you love me—dearly love me; and, my dear father, I love you most tenderly—most deeply; so as no language I could think of could describe to you; and I know that you believe that I do.

"Well, then, my father, will you not rejoice whilst your daughter tells you of the goodness of God as manifested towards her—a poor, sinful, guilty creature? O! I do so fear you will distrust this delightful work, and yet not from wilful unkindness neither, but from what you will believe to be a proper sense of duty. But, my dear father, with tears of joy coursing down her cheeks, your Leila tells you that she knows, she *feels all her sins are forgiven through the blood-shedding of Jesus of Nazareth.* O! be mild while I speak further, and yet I am

faint, and my hand trembles so that I can scarcely go forward.

"I am so happy!—O! my dear father, if you did but know how *very* happy, I am quite sure of this, you would rejoice with me; you would not hesitate a single moment, but would come, as you are invited, and drink largely of those fountains of bliss, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. I feel that God loves *me*, and that I love *Him*. I feel that I am his child, and I have through grace a blissful assurance that, saved by my blessed Redeemer, I shall see him, and be happy in his presence to all eternity. And will you not come to heaven, too, my dearest father?

"Do not suppose that I am mistaken, or that I am deceiving myself. O, no! I am as sure that all my sins are forgiven through Christ Jesus, as I am of the being of God himself. I could tell you the very minute when I first received this conviction, and was enabled to rejoice in God my Saviour. And if you, my dear papa, would in this same way test its reality, by possessing for yourself a knowledge of the love of God, it would *alone* be quite sufficient to convince you of the truth of the Christian religion. When under the influence of joy, no argument, however forcible or sophistical, could convince you that sorrow filled your heart. The result of faith in Christ is *peace* and *joy* in believing; to this my experience bears testimony. What further proof can I wish that its origin is divine? I do not. I have this internal consciousness, and am as certain of it, as of anything that affects my external senses.

"With great propriety we always attach importance to a remedy that has been tried, and more especially

too, if the individual recommending it has personally proved it to be efficacious. *I* once was very unhappy. Instead of submitting myself to the righteousness of God, I was going about to establish my own righteousness. At this time I was sunk in sin, and knew not where to look for one ray of comfort. My whole soul hungered for food my religion could not give; it groped in its deep night for some pillow on which to repose itself, and find the dawnings of heaven, but all was in vain till it found repose in the wounded side of Jesus; and here may I abide for ever! Allow me, then, my dear father, in the fullest filial affection, to recommend to you this remedy. I know you are not happy; you *cannot* be happy as you are at present, and this is the only cure, and it is the never-failing cure, for a weary sin-sick soul.

"I need not tell you the train of circumstances which, in a gracious and benignant providence, God used to produce this sweet change—of course you will understand me as meaning instrumentally; to God's Holy Spirit alone am I indebted for that illumination which enabled me to see *his* way of salvation. And O, it is so simple—only believe! 'Whosoever believeth on him [that is Christ] shall be saved.' Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. But the proofs that the Messiah *has* come, and that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, are numberless, unmistakable, and positive. Shall I go on? I must hope that you will bear with me.

"The law, which was given by Jehovah to Moses upon Mount Sinai, was designed for that land which was given to our great ancestor Abraham, and for that

land only, for it cannot be fulfilled in any other; therefore, through the dispersion of our nation, we are in the position of a people who have a law given to them by God which they cannot obey. From what we know of the divine government we are sure that it cannot consist with the wisdom and character of God, that this shall still be the law by which we are governed.

"And is not our destitution of a sacrifice bewailed in our service as a great calamity? In one of the prayers that are offered on the Day of Atonement, is this expression: 'Woe unto us, for we have no Mediator!' And to make up for this want of a sacrifice we have transgressed the law by our invention of rites and observances; a course expressly forbidden.

"Then, my dear father, in the absurdities of the Mishna and Gemara—the Talmud—see the consequences of man's attempting to supply the place of God's law. O! I do think that in every sense that book is a terrible insult to the divine wisdom, and, therefore, how sinful! If it had been desired to hold up the religion of the Jews to universal contempt, and outrage propriety, delicacy, and common sense, a more fitting book than the Talmud could scarcely have been devised. Moses gave no intimation of this traditionary or oral law—of this interpretation of God's written law. The law which was *written* and laid up in the ark, was the only law of which he spoke, and *that only* was commanded to be read in the ears of all the people.

"You, my dear father, are, doubtless, as well acquainted with the Mishna as I am, and, therefore, I need not point out to you—need not quote its impurities, nor its follies. Indeed, I must beg you will let

me recall a part of what I have just said; for some of them I could not write—you would not love me if I could. But how impious, to stigmatize God as the author of such a book!

"The Jews declare that the Mishna contains God's interpretation of his law; yet this *interpretation* is so obscurely given, that *it* requires an interpretation from man.

"And you know that this belief in the childish follies and foolish observances of the Talmud has caused an almost total neglect of Moses and the Prophets; or, when they are read, it is so carelessly and cursorily in spirit, that we never understand their meaning. Hence we are involved in a fearful darkness. We acknowledge, and honour, the Scriptures of the Old Testament as divine—so do the Christians: and during many centuries, the deep, rational study of the Old Testament Scriptures has been confined to them solely, or very nearly solely. Now, my dear father, this forms to us a powerful presumptive proof that the Scriptures of the New Testament are also divine; for, as the Christians, who are so deeply acquainted with the Old Testament, believe in them as divine, it clearly follows that they cannot be *hostile* books. Indeed, I might say further than this—that the Scriptures of the *New* Testament have led them to study those of the Old Testament; and the result is, that they acknowledge both as the written word of God, for they are agreed together. Can we say as much of our inane, debasing Talmud, and the books of Moses and the Prophets? Beside, what man knows much of the enormous Talmud? and he that does know much of it, knows this likewise, that

no mortal can ever fulfil the law set forth in it. Who then is safe? Hence it is that the Jew looks beyond the present life with terror and alarm; hence his dread of death, and his fear that in the grave he will be beaten by the Evil One, and suffer other terrors too numerous to mention. Hence he cannot die with holy confidence and composure, for he cannot be certain whether he shall be taken to heaven or not. R. Inani, on his death-bed, confessed and said, 'that he did not know whether he should be happy or miserable.' Once, too, my dear father, like the rest of our nation, I was unhappy and in doubt, and knew not where to turn for comfort; but now, through my Redeemer, I am very happy, for I have found the place of rest and calm repose; and this can be found in no other way but by resting the soul upon the atonement of Jesus.

"Before this I might have said that unquestionably the law of Moses is not perfect, inasmuch as it leaves some sins without an atonement; but this is to teach us to look forward beyond the type to the great Antitype—even the Messiah.

"All our nation and all Christians believe that the Old Testament writings give promise of a Redeemer, who will save his people from their sins. The prophecies in reference to this are most explicit, so that if we will diligently study them, with a prayerful dependence upon divine aid, I do not see that we can be easily mistaken as to his person. A history of the promised Deliverer's life is given: the manner of his death, his empire, the time and circumstances of his birth, and other particulars are clearly written. Let us see, my dear father, if Jesus of Nazareth be not the Messiah; and if we can

prove it from the books of the Old Testament, will you not then believe? O! you must; I must be sure you will; and then you and your child will glorify God together. I pray that the Lord Jesus will grant me the aid of his Holy Spirit, and graciously answer my petitions for the salvation of my beloved father.

"The Jews admit that they have no certain, definite knowledge of the time of the Messiah's appearing. 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' 'Our eyes fail while we wait for our God,' was anciently the language of our people. The hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, they know not. Hence they have ever been liable to deception, and again and again they have been bitterly disappointed. That there was a general and strong expectation of the Messiah at the time that Jesus of Nazareth appeared, is evident by the numbers of well-informed and learned men who received him; and who were so convinced of the truth of what they saw and heard, that they willingly suffered the most cruel martyrdom for his sake.

"But the Jews themselves likewise expected him at this period. This is especially testified by the heathen writers, Suetonius and Tacitus; and a reference to Josephus, our own historian, proves that from their hope of deliverance by the Messiah proceeded their desperate resistance of the Roman power. Under every misfortune of their country, they still clung to this hope, and more and more earnestly as its calamities increased. They were buoyed up by it during the miseries of the most dreadful siege which history records—that of Jerusalem. And we are told by Josephus, that on the day upon which the city was taken, the poor,

infatuated people were persuaded by a false prophet to ascend the battlements of the temple with the expectation that they would there receive miraculous signs of their deliverance.

"And that Jesus was the Messiah is confirmed by the sufferings of the early Christians. Their belief in Jesus was not a mere matter of *opinion*, it related to matter of *fact*. We certainly know whether we see a person, or do not see him; we certainly know whether we see anything wonderful, or do not see it. The first Christians united to assert a series of miraculous and astonishing facts; they were convinced of what they saw, and rather than compromise or deny the truth, they submitted to the most horrible sufferings, and the most cruel oppressions. These they endured, not for a short time merely, but through a long course of years. But they had seen the miracles of Jesus, and had, also, seen him after his resurrection from the dead; for 'he was seen,' says St. Paul, 'of Cephas, then of the twelve [apostles], after that *he was seen of above five hundred brethern at once*, of whom the greater part remain unto this present.' Now, supposing the story were false, would St. Paul have *dared* to make such an assertion, and mention in connection with it a host of witnesses, who, as he declares, still lived, and might, therefore, have come forward and contradicted this statement?

"Then the accounts of the Christians by heathen writers agree as to their sufferings and numbers with those accounts we have in the Scriptures. I extract the following passage from Murphy's Tacitus: 'In order if possible to remove the imputation [of ordering Rome to be set on fire], Nero determinded to transfer the guilt to

others. For this purpose he punished with exquisite tortures a race of men detested for their evil practises, by vulgar appellation commonly called Christians. The name was derived from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberus suffered under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea. They were put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and left to be devoured by dogs: others were nailed to the cross, numbers were burnt alive; and many, covered over with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night.' Now, although it was shameful to misrepresent the conduct of such a suffering people, yet Tacitus' testimony is valuable; and not the less valuable because he was a heathen, and an enemy to the Christians. It proves that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate; and that within thirty-one years after his crucifixion, there were great numbers of Christians in Rome, as well as in Judea; and that for their belief in Christ they were called to endure most fearful sufferings. All these beautifully agree with the accounts we have in the Scriptures.

"But now that the Jews have rejected the true Messiah, they are ever liable to imposture, for they cannot calculate the time for his appearing; thus at a loss, they have always been ready to grasp at any shadow. It has been so from the time of the impostor, Bar Cozab,* to that of Napoleon Buonaparte; and so far

* We extract the following note from Leila's correspondence. "In the second century of the Christian era, the Jews scattered over the whole Roman empire rose in rebellion. Their leader in the

have they now lost all pretension to a knowledge of the true time for his appearing, that embittered by frequent disappointment, they have uttered the dreadful anathema, 'Cursed be he that shall calculate the time!' Yet is the period for the Messiah's appearance *most clearly* marked out in Scripture. Why are our nation sceptical in reference to the prophet Daniel's inspiration? Simply because it is Daniel who most unmistakably defines the time of the Deliverer's appearance; and if Daniel be true, that is, if he be inspired, they have a deep conviction that the period is past. Therefore, it is, that they have removed him from his place in this תנך, and made him one of the writers of the כתובים, and not one of the נביאים.

"And who and what the Messiah is to be, the Jews profess to know not, except that they declare to us one thing, 'He is to deliver them from their afflictions, and give them in reversion, joy, temporal dominion and prosperity, and the triumphant possession of their own land.' I will notice this belief again directly. 'When the Messiah comes,' they say, 'he will manifest his

province of Syria was Cozab, who represented himself to be the Messiah, and in this he was supported by a celebrated Rabbi named Akibah. This Cozab persecuted the Christians, struck medals, and pretened to work miracles. He was crowned King of the Jews at Bether, and he then assumed the name *Bar Cozab, or son of a star.* The emperor Adrian sent Julius Severus to quell the rebellion. He completely subdued the rebels, took fifty fortified places, destroyed very nearly one thousand towns and villages, and slew in various engagements about 580,000 Jews. Embittered by the terrible consequences of his pretensions, the Jews afterwards designated this false Messiah *Bar Cozba*, or *son of a lie.*"

claims, and make his mission altogether plain.' How are they to judge of these claims, but according to their agreement with the prophecies? How would they have ever known that any Messiah should be given, except God had promised him? And has God declared no means by which he was to be known? Has he said nothing about him; what he is to be; how we are to be certified of him; whether he is to be a Gentile or a Jew? Yes: they know *something* of this, from the predictions of the Scriptures: they know that he is to be a Jew; and they do profess further, that they know enough to be able to declare that Jesus of Nazareth was an impastor and blasphemer. Why do they not study all that can be known by the prophecies; and having studied, why do they not declare to the world all that can be told about the Messiah; so that the Christians may compare the Messiah in whom they believe, with the one whom the Jews expect, according to the Scriptures; so that the Jews may be able to say, 'This is a picture of the promised Messiah; a history of his life, acts, death, and sufferings, as drawn from the unerring standard of Scripture. Judge ye between us this day!' Why should they hesitate to do this? The Christians are ever ready to bring into light their multitudinous proofs that the Jesus in whom they believe is the Messiah, the promised Son of God. But if, for a moment, we suppose that he is to come, how are the Jews to know him? They neglect the reading of the only book which tells of him; then how shall they know him? Even should a mighty conqueror appear, it could be no proof that he is the Messiah, any more than the conquests of Alexander, or Cæsar, or Judas Mac-

cabeus, or Buonaparte, could prove them to be the expected Deliverer. And even if one should come and work miracles, he must be brought to the test of the Scriptures. This our nation admit; then, why do they not study them? They also admit another scriptural definiton of who he is to be: 'he is,' they say, 'to be the son of Abraham, and Judah, and David.' But, if he were to come now that the genealogies are lost, by what means could the descent be proved?

It is a visionary and idle theory to suppose that Messiah will miraculously restore the genealogies. This inane supposition lays our nation open to imposture and forgery in this very particular. It is essential to the very nature of genealogical proofs that they be transmitted from age to age through all posterity. If the Messiah were to restore these registers, they would neither be *genealogical proofs*, nor, indeed, any proof at all of his descent. If he were distinctly seen to create such records, it would prove that he had performed a miracle—nothing more; it would be just as availing that he testified his descent by some other miracle. I speak reverently: I can think of no miracle which the Messiah, if he be not come, could now perform, that could be to man a *test* that he had descended from Abraham, and Judah, and David. To restore our genealogies would, in the opinion of man, bear the character of fraudulent evidence; and, therefore, it would not be such as God would ask of him to believe. In God's dealings with mankind he universally appeals to the exercise of their judgment, and, according to this judgment does he suit all conviction by means of miracles. He makes his proofs so plain, so clear, so direct

to the reason, that man cannot avoid conviction, unless he determinedly oppose himself to the truth. When Jesus made his appearance upon earth he did not ask men to take it for granted that he was the Messiah because he declared himself to be so. No; he exhibited miraculous signs; and of what character? Were they of a kind which might be forged; was it possible that they could be surreptitiously performed; or, after all, according to human judgment, would they, as proofs, be regarded as inconclusive? O, no; to the commonest reason, they were palpably, clearly divine. Were they not? To walk upon the sea; to restore the blind; to raise to life the dead; to heal the sick by a word; to calm the fury of the tempest, &c.; can there be any doubt that these were exercises of divine power? Indeed, our Saviour appeals to the judgment of the multitude; 'If I do not the works of my father, believe me not!'—I ask not that ye shall believe my Divinity, except as I prove it to you by my acts. Of this kind would be his language in reference to our genealogies: 'If it cannot be proved by your own registers that I am the son of Abraham, and Judah, and David, believe it not.'

"But, as the prediction that he was to be the Son of Abraham, and Judah, and David, is explicitly written in the Scriptures, it follows, clearly, that his appearance was to take place while his descent could be proved by our registers. Therefore, here again is powerful evidence that he has appeared; and here, I say, too, that this prediction *is* fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He was proved by our genealogies to be lineally descended from Abraham, and Judah, and David.

"I just now observed, that our people expressly believe that a part of the Messiah's office is, that he shall be a temporal deliverer. If this belief be a correct one, my dear father, it would show just this—that, on the coming of the Messiah, he would find them in a condition which *needed* temporal succour. And was not their position at the appearance of Jesus one which needed help? Were they not suffering intensely from the galling yoke of their Roman masters: from the severe government of Herod, the deputy sovereign under Cæsar? 'Yes,' they will answer, 'and if this Jesus, of whom you speak, were the Messiah, we should have been delivered from this tyranny!' How can you tell what he would have done, had you believed upon him? The prophet describes the Messiah as first to suffer, and then to conquer; and from this very prophecy, the Jews have thought fit to invent what I may call a twofold Messiah—Ben Joseph the Sufferer, and Ben David the Conqueror. He is to be a conqueror—but in what way? Is it not in this?—That all his *enemies* shall be put under his feet: that all his *foes* shall be bruised and made his footstool? And were not all the promises of deliverance made to his friends? Were not temporal blessings, in abundance, promised to these, and shame and confusion to his enemies? Undoubtedly. Evidently it was thus understood by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. This fully appears in his beautiful and prophetic song, in reference to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be

saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'

"And those who rejected, blasphemed, insulted, and crucified the Messiah, could it be expected that he would grant such heinous sinners temporal deliverance? That, at about the period of the coming of Jesus, the Jews were a most iniquitous nation, is proved by the testimony of Josephus; so wicked, that he observes, 'If God had not sent the Romans as his executioners, the earth would have opened and swallowed us up.' What a dreadful place! And, doubtless, the most crying evil of these people was their rejection and treatment of Jesus Christ the Son of God. How could such sinners expect deliverance? Did not Jesus weep and lament over Jerusalem, while he foresaw the punishment which would descend upon it, and the calamities which would befall it, for putting him to death? Listen, my dear father, to the thrilling passage, as I copy it from the gospel of St. Luke; and, O that, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, it may sink deep into your heart, is your loving daughter's prayer: 'And when he [Jesus] was come near, he beheld the city [Jerusalem] and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast

a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another! *because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*' What a solemn subject for deep thought is this passage! How signally was it fulfilled!

LEILA'S LETTER TO HER FATHER CONTINUED.

"Do you ask me what deliverance Jesus wrought out for his friends—for those who believed on him? Did he not deliver them from those awful calamities and sufferings which overwhelmed those who crucified him? Most certainly: he promised that he would do so. Permit me, my dear father, to transcribe the passage. It is in St. Luke's gospel: 'And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven; but there shall not a hair of your head perish. And when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains: and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.' He promised his disciples that 'not a hair of their heads should perish;' and this promise he fulfilled. He warned them of the terrible events which were to happen, and that when they saw Jerusalem compassed with armies, they were

to flee to the mountains—to depart out of the midst of Judea. The disciples obeyed their Lord, and were kept amidst the desolating scourge.

"In reading the page of history we find that, in every case, nations are blessed in a ratio proportioned to their Christianity. Mark England! Christians really rule the world with a power which is irresistible. All heathen, idolatrous, and unbelieving nations are weak and helpless. Look at the Jews! they are quite at the exercise of the Christian will. And at the Mahommetans! they are impotent as their religion is baneful and false. Just so of the Pagan nations. When no Jew could approach the city of his fathers, a Christian church was peacefully flourishing in Jerusalem. Here, my dear father, it might not be out of place if I were to say, that you must not suppose that the spirit of persecution and oppression which has been so often manifested towards the Jews, is at all sympathized with by the real Christian. Oh, no! I have found it to be exactly the reverse. I find that the real and earnest Christians love and honour the Jews, as the nation from which sprang the Messiah; as the penmen of the Gospel; as the people to whom it was first delivered, and by whom it was first preached; as those who in the first ages of Christianity formed an impregnable defence of the Christian religion; as a proof of the Gospel; and, to say no further, as their brethren in Christ, he being the great centre—the great salvation both of Jews and Gentiles. O, I always find that a true Christian is ready to acknowledge even that he is under obligations to the Jews which he can never repay. Father dear, with tears I beg of you, do not think unkindly of the Christians—

love the Christians; they very, very ardently love the Jews; and they are such a lovely and affectionate people, as I could not describe. I have found real and true happiness among them. Their hearts are knit to each other: the grief of one appears to be the grief of all, and each is ready to sympathize and soothe. Indeed, I could not have imagined, a short time ago, that such happiness, such union, and such affection were to be found upon the earth. It is a reflection, faint certainly, but real, of that feeling which pervades the bosoms of the spirits in celestial bliss. O, that my dearest father may soon partake of it too! and, then—but, indeed, I must not think, how happy we shall be.

"But I did not say what kind of Christians they were who persecuted the Jews; well, I scarcely need, for you could imagine for yourself. They were dead professors of Christianity, and perhaps not that—for, of the nations called Christian, the great bulk is composed of men making no profession; and the number who really and genuinely possess the faith of the Gospel are very few indeed. I pray that they may be increased. But there is no salvation for an unbelieving, nominal Christian, any more than for a rejecting Jew.

"But whither am I wandering? I return, and ask, have the Christians had no temporal blessings conferred upon them through the reception of the Gospel? God has fought for them against the mightiest powers and brought them off victorious. These blessings are, however, the minor blessings compared with the others which are showered upon the subjects of the Saviour's kingdom.

"Yet Israel is not always to be a servant and a by-

word among the nations. O, no! A brighter day is to dawn upon our ancient people; a day which, by their conversion to Christianity, shall recover them from their fallen and ruined condition. This is clearly expressed in Scripture. It is a part of the new covenant into which God has entered with the seed of Jacob: 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband to them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.' (Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34.) And how delightfully majestic is the prophecy of Isaiah, in which he tells in glowing and animated terms, of the glory of the church in the universal conversion of both Jews and Gentiles: 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together,

they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.' (Isaiah lx. 1—5.) Turning to the New Testament (bear with me, my dear father), we find the Apostle Paul, telling us the same glorious truths, and also of their happy consequences. 'If the fall of them [the Jews] be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.' (Rom. xi. 12, 15, 25, 26.) It is beautiful! Their misery and suffering have been deep and intense, but proportioned to these shall be the greatness of the mercy exercised, and their happiness and joy. The blindness is to rest upon Israel, only until the conversion of the Gentiles, or, as the meaning probably is, all Israel shall be saved—all Israel shall be grafted in, when the fulness of the conversion of the Gentiles is come in, or is coming in. And all the nations of the earth shall rejoice in their exaltation. 'And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.'

'Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'

"Yet how carnal are the Jewish expectations of a temporal deliverer! Is this the spirit manifested by Abraham, by Isaac, by Jacob? Did *they* desire earthly prosperity as their chief good? Was not the spiritual glory of the Messiah's kingdom, that upon which they set their eye of faith? O, my dear father, raise your views from things temporal, to those which are eternal. Read the sublimely impressive 72d Psalm.

"But why has such gross darkness fallen on the Jewish mind? Why is it that they cannot recognize the Messiah of the Scriptures? Because they have abandonded the hope and faith of their pious fathers in the person of the Messiah; because they have wilfully withdrawn themselves from the light of that blessed volume, by which our ancestors loved to test the purity of their faith and actions. And why have they forsaken the Scriptures, and reposed themselves upon the senseless and absurd fables of men? They have rejected Jesus of Nazareth; if they search the Scripture, it bears incontestable evidence to the truth that he was the Messiah—the promised Son of God. It is a test by which their religion cannot stand a trial. Then may God early arise, and by his powerful Spirit, tear away the veil which blinds our people, and thus, their eyes being opened, may he grant them the grace of repentance for their guilt and iniquity, and admit them to the participation of the glorious blessings of his salvation.

"In the Targum* of Onkelos, we find Genesis xlix. 10

* The Targums are translations of the Scriptures from the pure Hebrew of the original into a Chaldaic dialect. After the Baby-

—a passage of Scripture to which Christians appeal —rendered thus: 'There shall not pass away one exercising dominion from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his son's sons for ever, until Messiah shall come; and his is the kingdom, and to him the people shall hearken.' This proves that the Messiah has come, for dominion has passed away from the house of Judah.

"The rabbis, David Kimchi, Solomon Jarchi, Levi Ben Gersom, Aben Ezra, and others, among a host of theological works, have written commentaries upon all the books of the Old Testament. Our late writers, while labouring to refute the interpretations of Christians, in favour of the Divinity and Messiahship of Jesus, have contradicted their predecessors. They themselves have admitted it. David Kimchi wishes to apply the second Psalm to David merely; but he confesses the words נשקו בר should be translated, 'Kiss the Son.' He further confesses, that our pious forefathers had applied this Psalm to the Messiah, and goes on to say, 'If the Psalm be interpreted thus, the meaning will be clear; though it seems more likely that David composed this Psalm concerning himself, as we have explained.'

"And now, my dear father, I have to say that the accordance between the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and the record of the life, acts, sufferings, and

lonish captivity, this dialect became the national tongue. Some of the Targums are entitled to much more credit than others, because they are more ancient, and the original sense and signification is more strictly and literally maintained in the translation. Others are rather commentaries, with which fables are intermingled. The Targum of Onkelos is held in the greatest estimation, on account of its antiquity and purity.

death of Jesus of Nazareth, as given by the Evangelists, is perfect and complete, and—which for a moment I had let slip—his resurrection too; for the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and that it took place in accordance with the prophecies, are clear, conclusive, and beyond *rational* contradiction. Do you ask me if I can prove that in him the prophecies are accomplished? I must emphatically answer 'yes!' for the coincidences are multiplied, precise, minute.

"In the writings of David and Isaiah, we have a series of predictions which foretel, in the most emphatic terms, the following events:—That the Messiah was to be a descendant of David; that his mother was to be a virgin; that he was to be born in Bethlehem; that he was to be of humble birth, and without external recommendations to public notice; that he was to reside in Galilee; that his life was to be one of suffering; that he was to be rejected of his own people (the Jews); that he was to be betrayed by one who professed to be a friend; that he was to be treated as a malefactor; that he was to be mocked and insulted; that he was to display lamb-like meekness and patience; that he was to be put to a violent death, yet with the appearances of justice; that his executioners were to divide his apparel, casting lots for his vesture; that although put to death as a criminal, he was to be interred in a rich man's tomb; that he was to rise from the dead, without his body having undergone corruption; and that he was to leave the world, and ascend into heaven. Now, my dear father, all these prophecies are in the book which you honour as divine. There can be no forgery, for they were written long before the advent of Jesus. It

is a well authenticated fact, that long before the occurrence of the events described in the gospel narrative, they were in being, not only in the original Hebrew, but in a Greek translation also. Will you, my beloved father, take the Old and New Testaments; then comparing the inspired writings of David and Isaiah with the no less inspired records of the Evangelists, you will be fully assured that the agreement is *exact, precise.* This is not hyperbolical writing—an opinion given upon something I wish to believe; it is but just and properly true. Do, my dear father, prove it for yourself; read the BOOK, and you will be fully satisfied, that all the particulars contained in the prophecies which relate to the advent of the Messiah, are accurately fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. At least then, if you will not do this, let me prevail upon you to read St. Paul's beautiful Epistle to the Hebrews. It cannot do you *harm;* I recommend it as what I hope will do you good; and you enjoy elegant literature; well, believe me, that even in this low sense it is quite a rich treat.

"And I am not alone as a Jew bringing against the Jews the awful charge of crucifying the Lord of glory. Among their own writings I find observations by which they substantiate the charge. In one of their works, entitled 'Yoma,' they ask the question, 'Why was the second temple destroyed?' In the answer to it, among the principal causes given is this, מפני שנאת חנם.* I refer them to the 69th Psalm, one which is admitted by Aben Ezra to be prophetical of the Messiah. 'They hated me without a cause,' is charged by our Saviour upon his enemies.

* On account of the hatred without cause.

"Nor is it possible that the Jews can be altogether blind to the curse which has rested upon our nation through the eighteen hundred years which have elapsed since the crucifixion of Jesus. 'What adequate cause can be assigned for our long protracted chastisement? is one of their solemn questions. 'What can that crime be, which was committed by our ancestors, and of which to this day we have not repented? Whatever it is, it must be some act or deed, of a most atrocious character —an act or deed, in the approval of which we have steadfastly persisted, and the guilt of which we have obstinately refused to acknowledge.'

"And if they will seriously reflect, they cannot avoid the conclusion, that there is no one deed, to which in all ages they have given their adhesion, except the crucifixion of Jesus. With that event, too (and they cannot avoid observing it), commences the era of their sufferings and distresses. Here, what is related of Rabbi Solomon Marochan occurs to me: while reflecting upon the iniquities of the Jews, he said, 'The prophet Amos mentions a fourth crime for which we have been in our captivity—of selling the just one for silver. It manifestly appears to me, that for selling the just one, we are justly punished. It is now one thousand years and more, and during all this time we have made no good hand of it among the Gentiles, nor is there any likelihood of our ever any more turning to good. Oh, my God! I am afraid lest the Jesus, whom the Christians worship, be the just one whom we sold for silver."

"In A. M. 5588, the Czar of Russia issued an imperial ukase, which refused to permit the presence of the religious officers of the Jews in his dominions—a

decree replete with cruelty and oppression. In consequence of this act an address to the Jews of all countries was drawn up in London, and, I believe, published there, too. Doubtless, my dear father, you recollect this address, and the circumstance which called it forth, perfectly well. I will, however, select from it one solemn paragraph: 'These persecutions manifest a prevailing spirit which should alarm the Israelites of all countries and climes, and incline us to arouse our hitherto too dormant feelings, and to search our ways, that so, by tracing effects to their causes, we may attempt to find a remedy for the accumulated evils which have befallen, and still surround us; and that we may acknowledge the justice of our Creator, even the King of Israel, and own that these as well as all the other chastisements which have been heaped upon our devoted heads, are, as it respects the Almighty, merited by the sins of ourselves and our forefathers, as denounced by our lawgivers and prophets.' And oh! that Israel may enter into the spirit of this address—that they may begin that deep and prayerful examination of their hearts, which it inculcates. Do they inquire *why* their devoted race has been again and again visited with the direst calamities? O! let us roll back the page of history, and trace our sufferings as they rose from the moment of the erection of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the hill of Calvary. But, while we are humbled, debased to the dust, by the guilt of giving our assent to the crucifixion of the Son of God, let us not despair; but, full of hope believe, and become partakers of the blessings which he died to purchase for us. So shall that dark cloud which now hangs over our nation, melt before the glorious

beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and our souls be vivified by the dawning of an everlasting day. May God help us to this for his Son's sake. Amen.

"At the commencement of this letter, my dear father, I told you that I had *proved in my own soul*, that *Jesus is the Messiah*. This, to me, would, if it were alone, be quite sufficient; it is conclusive proof; I could desire no greater, for it is altogether satisfactory. Through Jesus I am washed from my guilt; through Jesus, I have a joyful looking forward to a glorious immortality; through Jesus, I rejoice with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.' I know whom I have believed, and I know that he has purchased and 'laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.'

"All my tastes, desires, and pursuits, are opposite to what they once were; old things are passed away, all things are become new. It is my constant prayer that I may have a heart purified, even to its most secret thoughts and imaginings.

"Having received so much from Jesus, I prayed for strength to act in obedience to his command, that I should make a public testimony of my belief in his name. He gave me this power to confess him before men; therefore, I have been publicly dedicated to his service by baptism, and by partaking of the memorials of his dying love; I mean, I have received likewise, the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Do not be displeased with me, my dear father, because I did not before tell you of all I have now made known. Could you but see how my heart palpitates with the deepest

love towards you, I am quite sure you would not. Perhaps, indeed, I ought to have told you before—I think my duty to you enjoined that I should; but really, previously to the present moment, I had not the energy to do so. Forgive me this wrong.

"I now commit this letter to you. I beg of my Saviour to attend it with his smile and benediction. O, that it may lead my dear father to those streams of bliss, of which his Leila has already tasted! O, that the angelic choir may have to tune their golden harps, and praise the Lamb of God, moved by the sight of my much-loved parent, prostrate at his feet! How happy we should be, my dear father, both journeying to Heaven together! Both having the sweet assurance, that even death itself could but divide us a few short years. O do, do begin to serve Jesus. I cannot write any more; my paper is moistened with tears: they are tears of mingled prayer and praise.

"May God be with you, and keep you, and bless you; and may he guide you, and lift up the light of his reconciled countenance upon you; yea, may you be very precious in his sight, is the prayer of,

"My dearest father,

"Your very affectionate and devoted daughter,

"LEILA ADA."

No. 180.

THE AGED BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH.

It is appointed unto men once to die. The time is fixed by an immutable decree. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we flee away. If some be permitted to live longer, yet the infirmities of old age must arrive, bringing with them labour and sorrow, the forerunners of death. Circulation will become languid. The senses of the body will grow dull and heavy. The faculties of the mind will be impaired, and will discover it by not remembering proper names. In this decline of life, believers are subject to the same infirmities with other men; they have no exemption from pain, or sickness, or death: but they have that which keeps up their spirits, and makes them patient and joyful. The consolations of God are then most needed, and he has promised them, and he is faithful: he never failed them who trusted in him. He has suited his promises to all the infirmities of age. He knows our frame perfectly, and has described it with an unerring pen, (Eccl. xii.,) that when we feel the signs of old age, we may apply to him for grace to profit by them. The symptoms there given are infallibly true and just, and are as so many monitors, warning the man that the vigour of life is declining, and that the

body is returning to the earth from whence it came. Happy is he who takes this warning, and remembers his Creator in the days of his youth, before the wearisome days come, of weakness and pain. He has fled to Jesus for refuge—and finds and experiences what he has engaged to do for his people, when heart and flesh begin to fail them. Blessed be his grace for the abundant provision which he has made for their faith and patience: he says to them, "I will be with you, I will never leave you nor forsake you: so that you may boldly say, The Lord is our helper, and we need not fear what the infirmities of age can do unto us." One of them, the Christian Hero, thus encouraged himself in the Lord his God—"Thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust even from my youth; by thee have I been holden up from the womb; thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels; my praise shall be continually of thee. I am a wonder unto many, but thou art my strong refuge." This was his trust; and God did not forsake him. He remembered his word unto his servant, whereon he had caused him to depend. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto him. O what great encouragement have believers to follow the steps of his faith! For his God is their God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, to young and old, who put their trust in him. His promise to the Israel of God cannot be broken. Thus he pledges his word of truth to them, giving them a warrant to pray unto him, "My mouth shall be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day long; for thou wilt not cast me off in the time of old

age, thou wilt not forsake me, when my strength faileth." To this prayer the Lord inclined his ear, and vouchsafed this gracious answer: "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb, and even to your old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs I will carry you. I have made and I will bear you, even will carry, and I will deliver you." These are some of his rich cordials for the aged, which he provided for them in his love, and he is sensibly touched with the feeling of their infirmities in administering them; for he himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. His compassions bind him to comfort and relieve his old disciples; and when they apply to him in time of need, he is ever present to grant them his promised help; yea, so suited to their case, as to make them grow in grace, as they grow in years. They bring forth fruit in their old age, the rich fruit of humility, and the ripe fruit of thankfulness; fruit that endureth unto everlasting life. We have a happy instance of this in God's goodness to an ancient believer, who lived to be an hundred and seventy-five years old. He was the friend of God, who had blessed Abraham through life, and that in all things, and who even to hoary hairs loaded him with blessings. For God had promised him, "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age;" and the sacred historian relating the fulfilling of the promise says, "He gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people." His old age

was good, in body and soul. Whatever infirmities he had, they were intended for good, and actually did him good. He was a very cheerful, pleasant old man. The peace of his mind had a sweet influence upon his temper and behaviour. It kept him from being fretful and peevish in his family. He was loving to his children, and kind to his servants; God himself being witness. He was also happy in his last years; for he spent them in faith, and when they came to an end, he died in peace; with his last breath he committed his spirit into the hands of him who had redeemed it, *full of years;* it is in the original one word—*he was satisfied;* so it is rendered, Psa. xvii. 15, "As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." He was satisfied with what he had enjoyed of the favour and friendship of his God; who had been his shield to defend him from all sins and enemies, and also had promised to be his exceeding great reward. This he obtained when he was gathered to his people, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the most blissful communion of the Three-One Jehovah. All the children of faithful Abraham, treading in the steps of his faith, have the same God to deal with, who keepeth promise for ever. It is recorded of Isaac, the heir of the same promise with his father, that he died in the same faith, an old man. He was tried with many infirmities, but we read of no complaints, though he was an hundred and eighty years of age. He expired in praise and thankfulness, satisfied with life, and happy in the prospect beyond death. And his son Jacob, an

hundred and forty-seven years old, when he was dying declared that he had waited for the salvation of God. Waiting faith is strong faith. And after he had blessed his children, and had given commandment concerning his bones, he quietly, as if he had been going to sleep, gathered up his feet into the bed, and died in peace, an old man and satisfied. All these lived in the world, strangers and pilgrims, looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And they were not disappointed of their hope; they all died in faith—in an act of faith, and were gathered to their people, to the general assembly and church of the first-born. When they came to the end of their faith, they came to heaven. The moment they expired, they entered the city, which God had prepared for them; and their bodies, sleeping in the dust, are in the covenant of life, and shall be raised and glorified in the morning of the resurrection. For our Lord proves that the dead shall rise, from this very circumstance; he says to the Jews—"Have ye not read in the books of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." In this faith the patriarchs died; being children of the resurrection, they left their bodies in the hand and care of a covenant God, well assured that he would raise them up to glory and life everlasting, according to that good word, wherein he had caused them to put their trust.

These examples of the loving-kindness of God to his aged servants were recorded for our learning; that

believers, if God by his providence should bring them to old age, might be encouraged to trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with such a confidence of their hearts, as not to doubt of the divine truth, or of the divine power. Whatever he was to them, he is the same to us—our God as well as theirs—our covenant God engaged to glorify both body and soul; on whom we are commanded to cast all our cares and concerns in extreme old age. If what is of nature be failing, what is of grace cannot. If the life of sense be dying, the life of faith should flourish the more; it is a life that cannot die; for the branches thrive and bring forth fruit in their old age, not of themselves, but because they are engrafted into the heavenly vine, in which they live for ever. "I am the vine," says Jesus, "ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." But through my Spirit strengthening you, he will make you bud and flourish, and fill the face of the world with fruit. He will so fill you with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Christ Jesus, to the glory and praise of God, that your last days shall be your best days.

In this view of old age, it may become a favourable time for exercising and improving faith; because the activity of the life of sense is abating, and thereby many things are removed, which before obstructed the growth of the spiritual life. Now is the time to learn to walk by faith, and not by sense. A believer, young in years, and young in experience, is often tempted to judge of himself by his feelings, more than by the word

of God. In a good frame he is a good believer. Then all is well with him. But when he is walking in darkness, he is very apt to question his state—"If all be right with me, why am I thus?" My present frame is very dull and uncomfortable—I am not so lively as I used to be in prayer, or in ordinances—my delight in God, and the things of God, is far short of what it was formerly—perhaps I have been deceiving myself, and crying, Peace, peace, when there was no peace for me.

From this temptation, age itself is a sort of deliverance; self-activity is weakened, and thereby through grace, self-dependence. The believer, if he be a good scholar, will now learn to walk more by faith, and less by sight. The vigour of his senses is decaying. The high spirits of youth are abating. His present lesson is very plain and simple, and while he attends to what is passing in him, and about him, he has a thousand monitors, calling upon him now to learn and practise a perfect dependence on those things which are always one and the same, without any variableness, or the least shadow of turning—one record of God—one Saviour—one Spirit—one faith, of which the Saviour is the author and the finisher. This faith is made to grow and flourish, as there is less dependence on other things; and as age itself tends to weaken this dependence, it becomes in the hand of the Holy Spirit, a favourable time to live less upon the things which are seen, and more upon the things which are not seen. Less of sense, more of faith. One scale rises as the other falls. The outward man dying, the inward man grows more lively—yea, grows up into Christ Jesus,

and that in all things. O blessed old man!—thou hast lived to a good time when this is thy experience; when in the prayer of faith thou canst cast all thy burdens on thy Saviour; "Lord, keep me, a poor helpless creature—now I feel that of myself, I can do nothing as I ought, or as I wish to do. Glorify thy grace in me, and strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man, that I may bless thee for thy salvation, and for the things which accompany salvation. Into thy faithful hands, for life and death, I commit myself, and all my concerns; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth."

But it must be remembered, that old age does not produce these happy effects of itself. It is not of nature, but entirely of grace, that any one is able to gain such spiritual profit from bodily infirmities. The mere natural man, fortify him with all his boasted aids of reason, and philosophy, yet cannot help murmuring, when age brings weakness, and sickness brings pains. He becomes peevish and fretful. Having no friendship with God, he cannot look up for divine supports, when all human begin to fail him. Under a severe fit of the stone, or a long fit of the gout, he is often out of all patience. Uneasy in himself, he is out of humour with every body and everything. How different is the believer in the same circumstances! His body feels pain as others do; but his mind is comfortable, and at ease. Happy in God, he has patience given him to bear his sufferings, and grace to profit from them; yea, the peace of God rules in his heart always, and by all means.

An old man with this peace which surpasseth all un-

derstanding, ruling in his heart, will be so far from complaining, that he has everything to be thankful for, which can render him blessed of the Lord. He is provided with an infallible antidote against all that old age can try him with. It is true, I have an infirm body, but thank God, I have a sound mind. Age has brought upon me great weakness, but this makes more room for the power of God, that it may be perfected in my weakness. I have many pains, but not so many as he has comforts to give me; in the worst of them he keeps me patient, "Father, thy will be done." I have an afflicted body, but I have a happy heart; although the outward man be perishing, yet I faint not, because the inward man is renewed day by day. My supports are great, the consolations of God not a few—I feel the symptoms of old age warning me daily of my approaching dissolution. Through grace I take the warning. They find me living, and I hope they will find me dying in the faith of the Son of God. The earthly tabernacle is taking down, but he does it with much tenderness and love, and assures me that he has prepared for me a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. May He who keeps it for me, and me for it, never leave me nor forsake me, till I be with him, where he is, and be like him, and enjoy him for ever and ever! Yet a very, very little while—hold on faith and patience, and I shall see Jesus in his glory, which is the heaven of heavens.

O thou merciful and faithful high priest, Jesus Christ, I bless thee for thy kind promises to the aged. Thou hast suited them in great mercy to all their infirmities,

and thou art always with them to help in time of need. I begin to feel the sad effects of sin in my body weakening it, and tending to bring it down to its appointed end. To thee I look, almighty Jesus, for thy promised grace. O grant me constant supplies of thy Spirit, that I may profit by my infirmities, may exercise and improve my faith in thee, that they may keep me humble, and I may pray more in faith; and keep me thankful, that I may be more in praise. Thine arm is not shortened, nor can thy compassions fail. Stand by me then, and hold me up according to thy word. Make me strong in thy strength, that I may daily put more honour upon thy love and thy power. In the decline of life, let me not doubt of thy faithfulness to support, and when thou seest it best, to comfort me. Vouchsafe me the consolations of God; when my heart and my flesh fail me, then be thou the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. When I am weakest in myself, then make me strongest in the Lord; and if it be thy holy will, that I should become quite helpless, an infant again, make me to lie quiet in thy hand, without murmuring or repining, but believing that thou art all my salvation, and enjoying in thee all my desire. Grant me this, Lord Jesus; for thy mercies' sake, let me die in faith. Amen and Amen.

A DYING MEDITATION.

EVERY place I have lived in has its monuments of divine love. Every year and hour of my life has been a time of love. Every friend, neighbour, and even enemy, has been a messenger and instrument of love. Every state and change of my life, notwithstanding my sin, has opened to me the treasures and mysteries of love. And shall I doubt whether the same God loves me? Is he the God of the hills and not of the valleys? Did he love me in my youth and health, and will he not also in my age, and pain, and sickness? Did he love all the saints better in their life than at their death? My groans grieve my friends, but abate not their love. God loved me when I was his enemy, to make me a friend. God will finish his own work. Oh, the multitude of mercies to my soul and body, in peace and war, in youth and age, to myself and friends! Have I lived in the experience of the love of God to me, and shall I die doubting of it? I am not much in doubt of the truth of my love to him. I love his word, works, and ways, and would fain be nearer to him, and love him more, and loathe myself for loving him no better. Peter may more confidently say, "Thou knowest that I love thee," than "I know that thou lovest me;" because our knowledge of God's great love is less than his knowledge of our little love; and without the knowledge of our love to God, we can never be sure of his special love to us. I am not entirely a stranger to myself. I know for what I have lived and laboured, and whom I

have desired to please. The "God whose I am, and whom I serve," hath loved me in my youth, and will love me in my aged weakness. My pains seem grievous; but love chooses them, uses them for my good, moderates them, and will shortly end them. Why, then, should I doubt of my Father's love? Shall pain or dying make me doubt? Did God never love any but Enoch and Elijah? And what am I better than my fathers? Oh, for a clearer, stronger faith, to show me the world that excels this, more than this excels the womb that conceived me! Then I should not fear my third birth-day, for any pangs that precede it. Methinks Daniel's title, "A man greatly beloved," should be enough to make one joyfully love and trust God, both in life and death. And have not all the saints that title in their degrees? What else signifies their mark, "Holiness to theLord?" It is but our separation to God as his peculiar, beloved people. And how are we separated but by mutual love?—*Baxter.*

My God, my everlasting hope,
I live upon thy truth;
Thine hands have held my childhood up,
And strengthened all my youth.

Cast me not off when strength declines,
When hoary hairs arise;
Around me let thy glory shine,
Whene'er thy servant dies.

Then in the history of my age,
When men review my days,
They'll read thy love in every page,
In every line thy praise.

THE GREAT GIVER.

The Saviour of the world has many excellencies. He has no equals among men or angels. He is beyond comparison, the great Prophet, the great High Priest, the great King, the Sacrifice, the great Exemplar, the great Saviour, and the great Redeemer. He is also the great Giver. None gives as he gives. So he claims: "Not as the world giveth give I unto you." Let us see how this is.

The world gives things of little or no value. But Jesus gives the best things; things which cost him many tears and his heart's blood. He gives grace and glory, peace and righteousness, joy and salvation. He giveth songs in the night. He giveth us the victory. He gives crowns that fade not away, and kingdoms that cannot be moved. He gave himself for us. Oh, the unspeakable gift!

The world gives sparingly of the little it can bestow. It doles out a meagre pittance. It retains for its own use all it esteems most precious. It hardly throws scraps to the dogs. Many a one has actually died of starvation in the sight of abundance, and no man gave unto him. But Jesus gives bountifully. His grace is large. There is not room to receive his blessings. He gives good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. His storehouse is full. His riches are unsearchable. Every believer may sing, "My cup runneth over."

The world gives grudgingly. At every step it reluctates. To yield up what it prizes is like parting with eye-teeth. Even a good man has need of the exhortation, "Let him give, not grudgingly, nor of necessity." But with Christ it is different. Even his sufferings for us were borne joyfully. "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame." "I lay down my life. . . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." To his people he says, "All things are

yours." He withheld not himself. He withholds no good thing. He gives like a God.

The world gives expecting an equivalent. "Sinners lend to sinners to receive as much again." But man can make no adequate return to his Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer. "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." Christ loved us freely. He accepts us graciously. We never can pay the debt of love we owe him. He does not expect that of us.

The world gives to its friends. Christ gives to his enemies. He gave new hearts and full pardons in one day to *three thousand* of his murderers. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "Christ died for the ungodly."

"Oh matchless kindness! and he shows
That matchless kindness to his foes."

"We love him because he first loved us."

The world often regrets the gifts it has made, and wishes it had them back. But the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Jesus revokes no promises. He never fails, nor is discouraged. He brings forth judgment unto victory. What he undertakes he accomplishes. By his grace and Spirit he gives repentance and faith. To these he adds courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. If Christ does one act of mercy towards a sinner, it seems but to prepare the way for many others.

The world gives unsatisfyingly. When it does its best, its beneficiaries still cry, "Who will show us any good?" They toil and pant, and still find that they are spending money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not. "Vanity of vanities" is the best thing

that can truly be said of all the world is, or has, or gives. But God gives us all things richly to enjoy. "When he giveth quietness, who can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? As one whom his mother comforteth, so does Jesus comfort his chosen. He satisfies the soul as with marrow and fatness.

The world gives deceitfully. "Trust not the world, for it never pays what it promises," said Augustine. It is circumspect of ceremonies, but it is heartless. It has no depths of tenderness. It is not sincere. "They speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts." "The words of his mouth are smoother than butter, but war is in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." The world kisses, but stabs under the fifth rib. Its tender mercies are cruel. But Jesus makes good every promise, yea, he does exceeding abundantly, above all we ask or think.

The world gives when its favors are not needed. It sends presents to the prosperous, and makes feasts for the victorious. "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." But the poor are forsaken, the feeble are forgotten, the slandered are avoided. Yet Christ gives what we need, and when we need it—strength to the feeble, warning to the careless, comfort to the afflicted, salvation to the perishing. God's richest blessings are for the children of sorrow. The greater our need, the larger are his mercies towards us. He gives double for all our sins. He abundantly pardons. There is none like him. No gifts are like his gifts. They are so seasonable, so wonderful, so innumerable.

In the words which have been quoted from Christ, there is special reference to peace, one of Christ's best blessings. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." To give our peace to any one is to wish him well, to bless him, to declare good will and friendly intentions towards him. But Christ's legacy to his people was peace in truth as well as in words. "This comprised peace with God, peace of conscience, a

sweet serenity of mind, arising from confidence in God and submission to him, with the hope of heaven, and a disposition to mutual love and harmony." No gift ever excelled this.

The world is full of compliments, which may mean anything, or nothing. Its insincerity is the poor tribute it pays to goodness and virtue. But Christ is the Prince of peace. He came to guide our feet into the way of peace, and to bring glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men. When he sent forth his apostles, it was with this salutation to every family: "Peace be to this house." In him we have peace. Yea, he is our peace. After his resurrection he twice said, "Peace unto you. Peace be unto you."

This peace passeth all understanding. Nothing can exceed it. Nothing can break it. It is the peace of God. It is efficacious. It quiets all fears and agitations. It is the fruit of the blessings bought by Christ. It is itself one of his chief mercies. By means of it we pass through tempests to our desired haven. There we shall be no more tossed with tempests for ever. There our troubled spirits shall be hushed and happy on the bosom of God eternally.

1. Is Jesus so great a Giver? Then let us prove our gratitude; let us love him as we ought; let us give him our whole selves; let us keep back nothing.

"Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do."

2. Is Jesus so great a Giver? Let us imitate him in kindness to the poor and needy. Let us give, expecting no return from men. Let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Benevolence is Christ-like, is God-like.

3. Is Christ such a Giver? Let us praise him, let us extol his amazing grace, let us glorify him. Praise of men, even the best, may easily become excessive. But none can too much laud the Redeemer. Glory be unto him, who was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty, the only Saviour; and let every creature say, Amen.

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION, 265 CHESTNUT STREET.

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THE DUTIES OF RULING ELDERS.

As in the civil, so in the ecclesiastical world, there are several distinct forms of government; each claiming for itself, if not an absolute divine right, at least to be a little nearer the Apostolical model than any of the others. First, there is Popery, or spiritual despotism:—secondly, English Episcopacy, which has its counterpart in limited or constitutional monarchy—next, and near akin to this, is American Prelacy, or ecclesiastical aristocracy—then Independency, or Congregationalism, which answers to a pure Democracy—and lastly, Presbyterianism, which corresponds in every essential lineament to that Republican form of government under which we are permitted to live, the fundamental principle of which is, the free representation of the people in all its varied departments. It has always been characteristic of Presbyterians to indulge a preference for free and liberal civil government; and especially have they been the most ardent friends and advocates of the principles of Republicanism, and the bitter enemies of all tyranny and despotism, civil and ecclesiastical. And hence the oppression and persecution with which they have been visited by kings and tyrants, and their apologists in ages past. This being the case, it is no marvel that they were at all times found among the foremost in our Revolutionary struggle, and have ever since shown themselves the most firm adherents and warm defenders of our Republican government. But it *is* strange, that any true patriot in this land, who really loves and admires our Republican government, should not also approve and prefer the Presbyterian form of church government,

since they are entirely identical in every important feature and principle.

If the question were proposed, In what does the Presbyterian Church differ from any other Church? the answers might be as various as the denominations with which it is compared. But if it be asked, What is it that distinguishes Presbyterianism from all other Churches or forms of Church government? the reply must be—*The Ruling Elder.* In opposition to Popery and all grades of Episcopacy, we maintain that Christ is the only king and head in Zion, having no vicegerent on earth; and that there is but one order or grade of clergy interchangeably styled Bishops, Presbyters, Ministers or Pastors according to the different aspects of their office. And, as to government, we differ from Prelatists, on the one extreme, who maintain that all ecclesiastical power and control is vested in the clergy alone; and from Independents, on the other, who insist that all power emanates from the mass of church members; by claiming that all ecclesiastical authority is vested in and must be exercised by a series of church courts composed of ministers and the representatives of the people—called *Ruling Elders.* And it is to the latter of these that we propose to address ourselves.

It is no part of our present design—though it would be no difficult task—to attempt to prove the divine authority for the Presbyterian system of Church government, or to show that it is in entire harmony with the word of God.* Yet we may observe, in regard to the office of Ruling Elder which we have now especially under consideration, and the authority for which has been so frequently and extensively

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* See "An Essay on the Warrant, Nature and Duties of the office of Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church. By the Rev. Samuel Miller, D D." 18 mo.

Also, "Qualifications and Duties of Ruling Elders in the Presbyterian Church. By the Rev. W. M. Engles, D. D." Tract No. 2.

Both published by the Board of Publication.

disputed, that this office is of no recent origin, but is noticd at very early period in the history of the Church. Even prior to the establishment of the Jewish dispensation, when the children of Israel were still groaning under Egyptian bondage, God commanded Moses to assemble the *elders* of Israel and announce to them his divine mission, and to consult with them in regard to the matter. So also in the wilderness, he often called for the heads and *elders* of the people; and they are spoken of in such a manner as to show that they were regarded as the rulers of the people, vested with authority to govern. True, it has been objected that as these exercised civil authority, they ought to be regarded only as civil, and not as ecclesiastical officers. But it must be borne in mind that their system of government was a Theocracy, and that, therefore, civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were united in the same individuals. But the fact that their ecclesiastical rulers were invested also with civil authority, can never disprove the existence of such officers. And besides, we have frequent mention of this class of rulers all through the subsequent history of the Jewish Church, long after the Theocracy gave place to a monarchy; and even down to the time of their final dispersion as a nation. And in the constitution of the Synagogue worship, after which it is generally admitted the Apostles modelled the Christian system, we find the same element existing. For every Synagogue had not only its Bishop, Angel or Chief Ruler, but also a bench of *elders*, who were charged with the spiritual rule of the congregation and the regulation of their worship. And the Apostles in organizing the Christian Church, unwilling needlessly to excite the prejudices or wound the feelings of the Jews among whom they were labouring, and desirous of making the transition from the old to the new dispensation as smooth and easy as possible, engrafted the Christian upon the Synagogue system with which they were familiar—adopting the same classes of officers and under the same names.

Hence, we hear Paul saying to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders in every city*, as I appointed thee." And on a certain occasion we find him calling together the *elders* of the Church of Ephesus. And in our text the Apostle exhorts "*the elders that are among you.*" And here let it be remarked, the plural is used in all these cases—*elders* not elder. But it is not reasonable to suppose that they were so largely supplied with preaching elders or presbyters as to have a plurality of them in every city and Church; but the natural inference is that *some* of them at least were mere *ruling* elders. But were there no other proof existing, the fact that the Apostles appointed and recognized two classes of elders, preaching and ruling elders, is definitely and fully settled by a single passage of Paul to Timothy: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." Here we are taught, if language is capable of conveying any idea, that there is a class of elders who may be said to "rule *well*"—yea, *so well* as to be counted "worthy of *double*," or the *highest* honour, and who do not still "labour in the word and doctrine," or preach the gospel; and that there is another class who, in addition to ruling, do preach, and who are therefore *specially* entitled to this "double honour." But this could not be the case if it were the duty of the former to preach and they neglected it. We therefore conclude that their duty was restricted solely to ruling. It is moreover evident from the sacred history as well as from the testimony of the Apostolic Fathers, in whose writings frequent mention is made of the different officers of the church, that in the days of the apostles, and for some time afterwards, ruling elders were *generally* if not *universally* found in *all* the churches. And even as late as the third and fourth centuries, after error and corruption had crept into the church and obscured its original purity and sim-

plicity, we find some of their most distinguished writers referring to this class of officers as of Apostolical origin, and as formerly existing in the church, and lamenting that the office had fallen into desuetude, through the pride and ambition of the clergy, or the negligence and indifference of the churches. And, though in the Catholic church Ruling Elders have been from an early period of her history entirely dispensed with, or rather, have been admitted to an inferior rank among the clergy, yet it is a remarkable and instructive fact, that among the Waldenses and Albigenses, those noble witnesses for God's truth, who amidst the surrounding intellectual and moral night, in which the world lay enshrouded during the dark ages, kept the lamp of truth burning brightly, as "a light shining in a dark place," preserving, to a great degree, pure and untarnished, the Apostolical doctrine and order of the primitive Church—among these at the time of the Reformation, the office of Ruling Elder was found everywhere existing, and it was their testimony that they had received and practised it from the days of the Apostles.* And it may be asked, whence else could they have received it? And still another significant fact is, that at the period of the Reformation, when a few leading minds began to emerge from the thick mists of ignorance and superstitious error that for many generations had brooded over the church—when they drew forth the Bible from the accumulated dust of ages, and attempted to reorganize the church on the simple, scriptural principles found recorded in that word alone—they all agreed in finding the Ruling Elder as one of the divinely appointed officers in the house of God. And all the most eminent theological writers from that period down to the eighteenth century—though many of them were themselves Episcopalians—not only admitted but insisted that the Ruling Elder constituted a part of the Apostolical model of the Christian Church.

* See "History of the Waldenses," published by the Board.

And indeed so essential is this office to the peace, harmony, and prosperity of any church, that almost every denomination of professed Christians, except the Catholics, though mostly denying its existence in the primitive church, or any scriptural authority for it, have been compelled, as a matter of necessity or expediency, practically to adopt it, or some substitute for it; though generally under another name. For instance, the Episcopal church have their "church wardens," who, to a great extent exercise the functions of the Ruling Elder, though under a name unknown either to the word of God, or to the early history of the church. And in those churches which adopt the Congregational form of government, the scriptural office of Deacon is permitted to usurp the place of the Ruling Elder, or both offices are merged in one under the former name. And so also in many other churches.

From these historical facts and considerations thus briefly stated, we think we are fully justified in the conclusion, that the office of Ruling Elder is not an invention of Calvin or any other of the Reformers, having existed long before their day, but that it is of Apostolic origin and authority in the Christian church, and that no church is rightly or scripturally organized where these officers are ignored or superseded.

The office of Ruling Elder is one of vast importance, and, next to the gospel ministry, of the most weighty responsibility of any station in the Christian church. For, though they are chosen by the members of the church, and may, therefore, be properly called the representatives of the people, yet they derive not their official authority from them, but from the appointment of God himself. As the pastor, though chosen by the votes of the congregation, comes to them clothed with the ministerial office and authority, not by virtue of their election, but by the ordination of God, so the elder holds his office, not from the people who selected him as *their* elder, but from Christ, the king and head in

Zion; and to Him, and Him alone, is he responsible for the faithful discharge of its important functions. It is obvious, therefore, that it was never intended merely to confer distinction and honour on the individual invested with it, or to impart influence or give prominence to him in the church or the community in which he moves. And he that seeks or assumes it from no higher and holier motives than this, greatly misapprehends its nature and design, and will find himself most grievously disappointed in the attainment of the object of his expectations. For while it does *incidentally* confer both honour and influence on those who assume it from *worthy motives*, and who seek to discharge its high and responsible duties with humility and fidelity; those seeking it from mere selfish and worldly motives, being wholly unfit for the station, and unfaithful in it, will be more likely to bring dishonour and reproach on the office they hold, and contempt and disgrace on themselves.

Many, and some even of the eldership, if not also of the ministry,—if we may judge of their opinions from their actions—seem to think this office a mere sinecure, or intended, at most, simply to comply with a rule of form or external order required by our Book of Discipline in the organization of churches; and that the office is of little practical importance, and its duties circumscribed and summed up in serving at communions, and filling their places in the judicatories of the church, when *entirely convenient.* But whoever will examine, in the light of God's word, the origin, nature, and design of this office, and the numerous and highly important duties attached to it, cannot but be convinced that it is possessed of such magnitude, and fraught with such fearful responsibilities, as may well enlist all the effort, talent, and piety that any who are invested with it, may bring to bear upon it; and cause any who are eager to assume it, to shrink back, and consider well before they rush into a position incurring such weighty obligations.

As members of Session, Ruling Elders are especially placed as *the guardians of the purity* of the church. They, together with their pastor, are set as door-keepers in that portion of the church, over which they are called to bear rule, to open to, or shut against any who may knock for admission into it; and upon their fidelity, under God, in the discharge of this duty, very much depends the purity of that branch of Zion. If, on the one hand, they are too particular and strict, they are in danger of wounding and seriously injuring some of God's chosen ones, or standing in the way of their obeying the dying command of their risen Lord; but if, on the other hand, they are too lax, readily admitting all that offer, without a proper regard to their evidences of knowledge and piety, they may, indeed, increase the number of their church members, but it will be at the sacrifice of the purity and prosperity of the church. Improper accessions add nothing to the strength of a church; for they only prove dead weights, clogging the wheels of its activity and progress, or frozen icebergs of formality and worldliness, that chill the piety, and quench the zeal of others. Now, the tendency of human weakness, and frailty, is to the latter, rather than the former extreme.

And it cannot be controverted that this is one of the great practical errors of the present day in our church—too great laxity in receiving members into the church. In the days of our fathers, when almost the whole community were homogeneous in their religious belief, sessions were not afraid, if they were not fully satisfied upon a thorough examination of an applicant, to reject him or at least to postpone his application; and in many instances the same individual was put off, again and again, until full satisfaction was attained by the session. And the wisdom and propriety of this cause were manifested in the high degree and almost universal evidence of piety exhibited among the church members of that day. But how rarely do we hear now of a church session

rejecting an applicant or even postponing his application! And are not the mischievous results of our modern laxity exhibiting themselves in the spiritual dearth and formality that prevail to such an alarming extent? And is it not time to return to our former strictness and care, lest the spirituality and vital energies of the church be wholly extinguished?

The purity of the church is to be guarded also by *the judicious exercise of discipline.* Church discipline is as really an ordinance of God, and its exercise, on proper occasions, as truly a duty, as is the preaching of the word, or the observance of any other means of grace. Christ directs us, "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone—but if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more—and if he neglect to hear them, *tell it to the church:* but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." That is, first try all private means of reconciliation; and if these fail, apply the discipline of the church; and if he is still obstinate, cast the offender out, and separate yourselves from him. And Paul directs the Corinthians in regard to the man charged with incest, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" and again "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." These, with many other passages that might be cited, show that discipline is both a *duty*, and a *means of grace.** And scarce anything tends

* We are told in the "Life and Remains" of the sainted McCheyne, that during the first years of his ministry, he shrunk from the exercise of discipline, and looked upon it with abhorrence, as something utterly inconsistent with the gospel ministry; but, having observed several cases in which it was made the means of the hopeful conversion of its subjects, he entirely changed his views, and says: "From that hour a new light broke in upon my mind, and I saw that if preaching be an ordinance of Christ, so is church discipline. I now feel very deeply persuaded that both are of God—that two keys are committed to us by Christ, the one the key of doctrine by means of which we unlock the treasures of the

more to degrade and corrupt a church, or to destroy its moral power and influence on the world around—to deface its beauty, retard its growth, and cripple its energies, than the neglect or improper and partial exercise of discipline. And on the contrary, the timely and prudent, yet faithful exercise of discipline very much tends to promote the purity, prosperity and efficiency of any church. But it should not be forgotten, nor can it be too deeply and permanently impressed on every elder's mind, both teaching and ruling, that discipline to be beneficial, must be of the right kind, both as to *time*, and *manner*, and *motive*—it should be prompt, yet not hasty—firm, yet kind and tender—impartial and uniform, or exercised on all who may deserve it alike, regardless of their station or standing, official or otherwise, in the church or the world—and it should be exercised with a sincere and affectionate regard to the spiritual welfare of the individual, as well as the church, and never to gratify a spirit of pride, malice or revenge. This duty is one of the most unpleasant and indeed painful to a benevolent mind that the officers in Christ's house are called upon to perform—and one too that requires the exercise of all the self-denial, patience, prudence, zeal, humility, wisdom and piety that any individual can bring to its discharge. But though it is a duty to which every ingenuous mind will approach with extreme reluctance; yet it is one which the ordination vows of every elder forbid him to neglect, or pass lightly over. Yet important and binding as it is, inasmuch as it is generally attended with trouble and difficulty, anxiety and perplexity—is unpopular with worldly professors, and often exposes those who engage in it to obloquy and reproach, and to the opposition and enmity especially of the friends and connections of its subjects; there is frequently on this account too great a tendency in church

Bible, the other the key of discipline by which we open or shut the way to the sealing ordinances of the faith. Both are Christ's gift, and neither is to be resigned without sin." And this doubtless is the experience also of many other faithful pastors.

officers, and church courts, to endeavour to evade it. And when engaged in, is it not too often in an improper spirit or from unworthy motives? And is it not sometimes at least partial in its exercise?—being visited with great strictness, if not actual severity, on the obscure and friendless, while those distinguished for their wealth, and influence in society, and the number of their personal friends, are screened from justice or their faults passed lightly over? Such things ought not so to be; and if they are permitted or even winked at by the officers of any church, they doubtless will bring the frown of God upon that church and its officers. And no church can long prosper where such a state of things exists.

But while the prompt, faithful and impartial exercise of discipline is thus insisted on, it is by no means intended to inculcate the doctrine that church officers should be hasty or eager to engage in it. On the contrary, actual discipline should be the last resort, and engaged in, only when all other means to effect the desired object have been faithfully tried, and failed. It is after we have gone alone to our brother, and then taken one or two with us, and still failed, that the Saviour directs us to "tell it to the church." All private means must be used first. And where there is a prudent and wise Session, these means will generally prove effectual, and few cases of actual discipline need ever arise in any church. But instances will sometimes occur when all the means and efforts the most judicious Session can bring to bear—short of actual discipline—will utterly fail to settle the difficulties or remove the scandal from the church: and it is to cases of this character that reference is had in the preceding remarks.

But it is not only as members of the church courts that Elders have duties devolving upon them—although too many seem to think this the limit of their obligations and responsibilities—they have duties also as individuals of a more private nature and daily recurrence, and of no less impor-

tance, though perhaps less onerous and unpleasant. The Apostle exhorts the Elders in our subsequent context, "*Feed* the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight* thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." And Paul exhorts the Elders of Ephesus, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." These passages are addressed not to ministers alone, but to all the Elders, ruling as well as teaching, to all the members of Session individually as well as collectively. They are called "overseers," or bishops of the flock, and are directed to "take heed to all the flock," and "to themselves" as "ensamples to the flock." They are "to be ensamples" in gravity, in zeal, in diligence and devotedness to the cause of Christ, ordering their daily walk and conversation in all their intercourse with others, even in their business transactions, in such a way that they may be safe and wholesome guides to those over whom they are placed. The eyes, not only of the world, but of private church members will be upon them as a copy; and ordinarily they need not expect more piety, or zeal, or holiness, or consistency of life in the private members than they themselves exhibit. But on their conduct and fidelity very much depends the standard of piety in the church where they bear rule. And next to themselves, they are to take the oversight of the flock, in their daily walk, watching their conduct, not as spies to report their deficiencies, or trumpet abroad their delinquencies, but as friendly monitors and counsellors seeking their welfare, and "watching for their souls as those that must give account," encouraging the weak, confirming the wavering, warning the thoughtless, exhorting the negligent, reclaiming the wandering, and rebuking the erring, and endeavouring by every means in their power to stimulate each and all to diligence and duty.

They should ever be ready to interpose their kind offices as *peace-makers* between brethren and neighbours, quieting disputes, and reconciling differences. This is ever a *delicate* and not unfrequently a difficult duty, requiring a great deal of prudence and discretion, patience and forbearance, as well as humility and wisdom. A rash, impetuous, or passionate man, or one who will suffer himself to become a tale-bearer or partisan, will effect incalculable mischief by fanning the flame of strife, and driving the parties farther asunder, instead of healing their difficulties and effecting a reconciliation. But a judicious Elder, who by a consistent walk has succeeded in gaining the confidence of the community in which he moves, may accomplish great good by a timely and kind effort to quell the rising storm of wrath, and calm the troubled waters of strife and contention; and thus frequently prevent vexatious law suits or trials in church courts, and preserve the honour of religion untarnished, and the peace of the community undisturbed. Each Elder should make himself particularly and intimately acquainted with all under his charge, especially those in his own district, and secure, as far as possible, the friendship, respect, and confidence of every member of each family, always paying a special regard to the "lambs of the flock." He should not only hold himself at all times in readiness when called upon to accompany his pastor in parochial visits, but frequently, as opportunity offers, without waiting for the company of his pastor, he should visit, converse and pray with them, and endeavour to make himself acquainted with the spiritual condition of each one, encouraging the desponding, counselling the perplexed, and exhorting the negligent and remiss, striving to allure all along in the paths of virtue and holiness. And should he discover any whose minds are tender, anxious, or inquiring, let such share a special place in his attention, prayers and efforts, that they may not be left to grieve away the Spirit, but be led to "the Lamb of

God that taketh away the sins of the world." The sick also, and those in affliction of any kind, should not be overlooked or neglected; but he should manifest his sympathy by frequently visiting, and praying with them, and endeavouring to impart instruction and comfort to them, in their times of trouble and distress.

He should carefully strive to instruct the children and youth, by kindly and affectionately conversing with them, showing them that he feels an interest in their welfare, frequently catechizing them, and encouraging them to commit to memory portions of Scripture, the catechism, and sacred poetry. Here is a field of usefulness for Elders, at once the most attractive, and promising the speedy and abundant reward of their labours. The Session should see that all the children receive suitable instruction. They should have under their superintendence and control, the Sabbath school instruction of the church, themselves taking an active part in it, willing to instruct *any*, from the mere child to the most advanced pupils in the Bible class. They should occasionally look into the common school also, to see what kind of instruction the youth are receiving there. For it is not enough that the flock be fed, but they must receive suitable food; so it is not enough that the children and youth are taught, but they must receive healthful instruction, and each according to their age and capacity; and Elders have a great responsibility in this matter. They should also maintain meetings for social prayer, each in his own district, if expedient, and if not, by a union of two or more in the same place. Nothing need here be said of the importance or advantage of such meetings, as all admit them to be essential to the spiritual interest of the members of the church individually, and of the church as a whole, and their beneficial effect on those that are without, as an instrumentality for their conversion to God. They are the thermometers of the church's piety, and ordinarily no church

can expect a healthful prosperity and increase where they are omitted or neglected.

It is admitted that many of these duties specified as belonging to the eldership have generally been considered as attaching chiefly, if not solely to the ministry; but a careful scrutiny of the divine directions in the sacred word, will show that there is nothing there to restrict them to the ministry, but that they rest with at least equal obligations on the eldership. And it is reasonable that it should be so, for practically, it would be impossible for any one man alone, adequately to perform all these varied duties, and at the same time perform all the other duties devolving on a pastor. And hence the wisdom and kindness of the great Head of the Church appear in giving elders as "*helps*" to the ministry, for the discharge of these important duties, and they are equally responsible with him for their faithful performance; nor will any denial of their binding obligation ever release them from this responsibility.

Moreover, Elders are designed to be *monitors* or *counsellors* to *their pastor, his cabinet,* or *privy council.* In all governments not despotic, the chief ruler or magistrate has his private cabinet or council to aid him by their advice in the management of the affairs of State. So the minister, who is entrusted with the care and management of the spiritual interests of a pastoral charge, needs the counsel of the most intelligent, judicious, and pious among them, to aid him in the proper administration of its affairs. And it is not enough that he can apply to them as private members, for they might then feel some delicacy or reserve in expressing their opinions; or, not being charged with any special responsibility in the matter, they may not have given that attention to the subject that would qualify them to give prudent advice or wise counsel. But occupying an official station as counsellors, they are bound to give that attention to the condition, wants, and necessities of the Church over

which they are placed, that will prepare them to give an intelligent opinion on all questions that may arise connected with the spiritual interests of that branch of Zion. And they should always be ready to consult *freely* and *confidentially* with their pastor, on all measures that may be proposed, and to suggest any plans and means they may think calculated to build up the kingdom of Christ and benefit souls. They should keep him apprised of any cases of seriousness, sickness, or affliction of any kind that may demand his notice; that he may improve such opportunities for good at the proper time. And while they should not run to him with all the contemptible "tittle tattle" they may hear, or with what every one may say of him or his ministrations; yet if there are any objections found to him which possess any particular weight or importance, or any dissatisfaction with his course that he might correct or remove, these should not be withheld from him. For often a few words of explanation at the commencement of a dissatisfaction, might entirely remove it; whereas, though small at first, if left to increase and spread, it may result in a very serious difficulty, and even sometimes in the removal of the pastor from his charge. They should "not suffer sin upon him," but, if they have known of any thing wrong in him, they should go to him, and, as faithful monitors, kindly and affectionately tell him his fault, and "entreat him as a father" to forsake it, and not set themselves against him and seek his removal, as is sometimes done.

They should also defend his character and conduct from all unjust imputations, and commend him and his ministrations to those especially who do not attend on the means of grace, and strive to induce their attendance. They should uphold his hands, and encourage him in every good work, not only by kind words and prayers, but also by their hearty cooperation and efforts to aid him in carrying out every scheme for the prosperity of the church, and the salvation

of souls; and by taking a lead in the benevolent operations of the day, and not leave him to battle alone against the prejudice, avarice, and bigotry of those that place themselves in opposition to them. Some Elders seem to think they have a perfect right, if they can, to roll off the odium of any unpopular measure on the minister; but the faithful Elder will rather present himself as a screen to ward off the numerous shafts of reproach that might otherwise fall upon his pastor, and impair his usefulness. They should remember that Elders are to be the Aarons and Hurs to the minister, that they should do what they can to add to *his* influence and acceptability with the people, and sustain him against the varied and mighty influences that are often brought to bear against *him* and his efforts to promote the cause of Christ, even though they themselves be left among the more unnoticed and obscure.

They should also see that the temporal wants of their pastor are fully supplied, that the church not only give him all that they promise, and promptly at the time it is due, but that this be sufficient to keep him free from corroding worldly cares and perplexities, that his mind may be given wholly and without embarrassment to the great work in which he is engaged.

But our limits forbid us to notice all the varied and responsible duties devolving on the Ruling Elder. We can only hint at a few of the more important, leaving the reader to expand and fill up the details at his leisure. But surely enough has been presented to establish the assertion that the office of Ruling Elder is anything else than a sinecure or mere nominal office, and to show that, if rightly understood and appreciated, and faithfully filled, it presents a sphere of usefulness sufficiently extensive to satisfy the highest aspirations of the most pious and talented in the church; and is fraught with the most fearful and weighty responsibilities. And it must be obvious that not every

church member is qualified to occupy this station, or competent to discharge its high and solemn obligations. Special and peculiar qualifications are not only desirable, but to a certain extent absolutely essential.

An Elder should be a man of *intelligence*. He should possess a general knowledge of men and things, and have a particular acquaintance with the government and discipline of the church; otherwise he is unprepared to act with discretion as a member of a church judicatory. He should not depend, as too many do, on the ministry to tell him what is order and what is not, or give up his judgment to be passively ruled and directed by the dictum of another; but he should study these things for himself, so as to be able to form an intelligent and independent judgment in all cases that may present themselves for his consideration. He should also have an extensive acquaintance with the *doctrines* of the church *as a system*, and their connection with, and bearing upon each other, and with the leading arguments by which they are defended—not that he may become a polemic—but that he may be able to instruct the ignorant and enquiring, meet the objections of cavillers, and defend the truth against those who may oppose it. He should have his own views of truth thoroughly and firmly fixed, and intelligently settled on the foundation of the divine word, and not be "easily driven about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"—"not a *novice*, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil." He should be characterized, not by contracted and selfish views, but by enlarged and extended liberality of feeling and sentiment—acquainted with the wants of the church and the world, and with the various schemes and measures that are in operation, for the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the conversion of the world to God; and should cordially co-operate in all these plans and efforts, to the extent of his

ability; or otherwise he may retard rather than promote the cause of benevolence, and the progress of the kingdom of Christ in the world.

He should be a man, too, of *prudence* and *sound judgment.* And by prudence we do not mean *timidity,* or backwardness to face and discharge duty even though difficult and trying to human nature, nor that *imbecillity* which shrinks from sacrifice and responsibility—but that *wise discretion* which will dictate not only *what* is proper to be done, but also the most appropriate *time,* and the best *manner* of doing it. It is opposed to rashness and recklessness, and is necessary to the proper discharge of *all* public duties; but is especially desirable, if not actually indispensable, in the exercise of discipline, in attempting to reconcile differences between brethren and neighbours, and in administering counsel, warning, or reproof. Moreover, he "should have a good report of them that are without," in his general conduct as a Christian—especially for gravity, sobriety, and strict integrity and honesty in all his dealings, avoiding all those pitiful frauds that are by many thought the justifiable arts of trade—all over-reaching, meanness and parsimony, and everything that would betray a "love of filthy lucre." He should have his own children also in subjection, instructing them in the doctrines and truths of God's word, instilling into them proper principles, correcting their evil habits, restraining them from vicious and wicked practices, and accustoming them to the paths of virtue and obedience: ever maintaining with them the regular and daily worship of God in his house, and striving constantly to live out practically, and thus commend to them, the principles and practice of that holy religion which he professes, and endeavours to instil into their minds.

But above all, he should be a man of *deep, ardent and devoted piety.* His piety should be real, not doubtful—spiritual and heartfelt, not cold and formal—consistent and regu-

lar, not fitful or intermittent. It should be serious; but not sour or morose—dignified; yet humble, mild, gentle and affectionate—so devoted, that he will count no labour too great, and no sacrifice too expensive, that he may honour Christ, and win souls to the Saviour. Such is the weakness of human nature, that office generally has the tendency to generate vanity and imperiousness; but his piety must lead him to "esteem others better than himself," and "not to lord it over God's heritage," but in meekness and humility be willing to be regarded as the servant of all, that he may by all means save some. His piety should be that of principle and life, rather than of form and profession—a piety that, wrought in the heart by the power of divine grace, will shine out in all his life and conversation, and will be felt in the holy atmosphere with which he is surrounded, and exhibit itself in his zeal for the glory of God, and in his ardent desire and efforts for the progress of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of immortal souls. This qualification is a *sine qua non*. No other can supply its place; nor indeed can all others combined compensate for the want of this. Without it, no duty can be performed aright, or acceptably to God, or profitably to the church. He may for a time drag himself through the external round of his duties; but, having no heart in the work, he will soon esteem it a cross or drudgery, and will become a mere drone, avoiding and shifting off duty whenever he can, or performing it by compulsion or necessity, and not from love and free choice. But the man, whose heart is filled with love to God, and burns with a holy zeal for his glory and the salvation of souls, will engage in these duties with alacrity and delight, and, looking to God for divine assistance, will perform his work with acceptance to God, advantage to the church, and saving benefit to the souls of men.

Let me then say to the brethren of the eldership, that if any of you are conscious to yourselves that you are destitute

of these qualifications—and especially of genuine piety of heart—the sooner you cease to exercise the office, the better will it be both for yourselves, and for the church over which you bear rule. You will but cast a blight and mildew on all around, and yourselves incur accumulated guilt, by continuing its exercise. Nor is it always those who *think* themselves the *best* qualified for this office that *really are* so, but generally the very reverse is true. Yet, let no retiring, humble, self-diffident Elder, who, though conscious of great deficiency, is really desirous to glorify God, honour the Saviour, promote his cause, and benefit souls in the exercise of the eldership, be discouraged on account of the great apparent contrast existing between his qualifications and the high standard laid down in the word of God. Others perhaps regard that contrast as far less than you do yourselves; and this very humility and self-distrust is one of the evidences of your fitness for the office and your adaptation to usefulness in it. But let all such, taking the standard laid down in the Scripture as their mark, use with diligence all the means that God has placed within their reach for the speedy attainment of all the qualifications required, resting satisfied with nothing short of complete conformity to all its requirements.

And, in conclusion, let me ask, is not the office of Ruling Elder greatly undervalued at the present day among us? Do not ministers fail to appreciate them and their labours as highly as they ought? Do they not expect too little of them? Do they lean on them as "helps," and look to them as counsellors as much as they ought? And is all the pains taken to instruct and train them for the particular duties of their office that there might and ought to be? And do not the great mass of our people fail to place that high estimate on their spiritual rulers that the importance and divine origin of their office demand, and to give them that "double honour" that is due to all that "rule well?"

Do they look up to them for counsel, reverence and "obey them in the Lord" as they are required to do? Do they teach their children a proper regard and respect for them, and encourage them in their efforts to instruct and benefit their children? And do they cheerfully submit themselves to their kind admonitions and reproofs as they ought? And do not you, brethren of the eldership, sadly underrate the importance and responsibility of your office? Do you realize as you ought that it is a stewardship committed to you by God himself for which you will be held accountable to him? It is by no means desirable, but greatly to be deprecated, that you should suffer yourselves to become proud or vain of it, "or think of yourselves more highly than you ought to think"—but every Elder should strive, by fidelity, zeal, and diligence, to "*magnify his office*"—seek to know his duty *fully*, and to discharge it *faithfully*—and thus make his influence felt—not by vainly pushing himself forward into notice, or stepping out of his appropriate sphere—but by the results of his unostentatious yet well directed labours in the cause of Christ. Many, and perhaps the most of you, are very willing to acknowledge your great deficiency in point of qualification—but are you using the means to obtain those qualifications in which you are deficient? A little time and effort on your part, with the Bible, Confession of Faith, and other religious books within your reach or possession, with a thirst for knowledge, and a mind to the work, would soon secure to you all those *intellectual* qualifications that are essential—and with the inexhaustible store-house of God's grace thrown widely open, and the merciful invitation to draw thence all we need, being freely given through the mediation of our atoning High Priest—surely it is your own fault if you are not possesed also of every *spiritual* qualification.

And are the Elders in our church generally found discharging with diligence and fidelity all the varied and responsible obligations devolving on them as office-bearers in

the house of God—pressing fearlessly and boldly on in the path of duty, regardless alike of the frowns or flatteries of a guilty world? Does their fidelity exhibit itself in their careful reception of members into the church—in their prompt and impartial exercise of discipline—in their conduct as "ensamples to the flock," and in their more private duties and labours among the people, and their deportment towards their pastor? If not, there must be guilt proportioned to the degree and extent of the delinquency, and they have need to take the alarm immediately. But what an incalculable amount of good are all the Elders in our church capable of accomplishing! There are in the three thousand churches in our connection probably not less than nine thousand Ruling Elders, or an average of three to every church. Now, if all these were men of the right stamp, men of faith, and prayer, and zeal, and holiness, as we trust the most of them are, all labouring with earnestness, and persevering industry to build up the cause of Christ, and save souls, how much good might not such a band of men, especially when considered in connection with our twenty-five hundred ministers and licentiates as co-labourers, accomplish by their unwearied labours, prayers, and influence in building up the kingdom of the Redeemer in our own land, and in extending the knowledge of God and the Lamb through all the dark and benighted parts of our sin-cursed world! No arithmetic can compute, nor human language describe the inconceivable amount of benefit arising from the combined efforts and prayers of such a host of labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, not only to the present generation, but through all succeeding ages down to the end of time; eternity alone can fully develope it. And may the Lord give us all grace, each in his respective station, to be diligent and faithful even unto death, that through grace we may receive a crown of life and glory, in the kingdom of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Amen.

A MODEL ELDER.

I shall never forget the character of one Ruling Elder with whom it was my happiness to be intimately acquainted in early life. He was born and spent his youth in the bosom of a Congregational Church, but toward the middle of life he entered the Presbyterian Church, and seemed to embrace with perfect cordiality her system of apostolic order, as well as of scriptural doctrine. Recommended by his good sense, his amiable temper, and his fervent and exemplary piety, he was soon elected and ordained as a Ruling Elder. He was not distinguished by great wealth, nor by high station in secular society; nor had he any of those imposing manners or factitious arts by which the children of this world know how to arrogate to themselves the honours which men can give; for he was one of the most modest, unassuming and meek of men; but he was, on the whole, among the most diligent, indefatigable, exemplary, and devoted Ruling Elders that I ever saw. He was not slothful in his worldly business; but he had many leisure hours, and they all seemed to be consecrated to the cause of Christ. He was, in every sense of the word, a helper to his pastor. He visited and prayed with the sick, with the tenderest assiduity. He was watchful and quick-sighted to discern those who were serious, anxious, or disposed to inquire concerning their eternal interest, and ever ready to converse with and instruct them. He was never absent from the prayer meeting, and always ready to take his part in conducting its exercises. He kept his eye on the children of the Church; made a point of recognizing them whenever they fell in his way, and of striving to engage them in the service of Christ. He was ever ready to assist his pastor in catechizing them, and to supply his place in that duty when he was absent. He was vigilant to observe everything in the face of the congregation which called for attention. When he saw any one who appeared to be impressed by the preaching of the word, he seldom failed to notice it, and without delay, to pay the individual an affectionate visit. He reproved sin and error wherever he observed them, with a mixture of solemnity and paternal tenderness which was generally received, even by the culprit, as an "excellent oil." He was ever vigilant to discern when a member of the Church was relaxing in diligence, or sliding into error, or evil habits, and to administer an affectionate admonition. He was constantly giving to his pastor some information to guide him, some hint or suggestion to stimulate him, or some effort of co-operation to aid him; but all with a modesty, a humility, and a respectfulness which evinced that he had no desire to exalt himself, but to promote his pastor's honour, comfort and usefulness, and to attain the salvation of souls. In short, wherever he was, he seemed never to lose sight of his duty as an "overseer of the flock," and as bound to be a source of instruction and edification to all whom he approached.—*Dr. Miller on the Eldership.*

No. 183.

THE ARMY SURGEON.

"And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?"

THE inquiry of these soldiers, was not peculiar to themselves. From the days of John the Baptist until now, many an individual, set among others for the military defence of nations, has sincerely inquired of the Captain of our salvation, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Who can compute the amount of good that might be accomplished by heaven's blessing on the labours of one such spirit, associated with the many, that, heedless of eternal realities, are ready to kindle strife, and to lead on contending parties, to deadly conflict? Were the guiding men in our Army and Navy, and all the Heads of Departments in our National Government, themselves under the guidance of the Prince of Peace, what evil might be prevented, what good secured! In the United States' service, we may, here and there, find a true and devoted follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. On the frontiers of our country, and in some cases, shut out from the institutions of religion, men of this character exert a prominent influence in the communities around them. Sometimes churches have been formed by their instrumentality, and the means of grace furnished to a people ready to perish.

As an illustration, let us glance at that faithful and useful Christian, Dr. George F. Turner, who, a few months since, died at his post at Corpus Christi. He was a native of Boston, a graduate of Harvard University. After having studied medicine, he practised as physician in the Army Hospital, with a view of entering the army. Soon after receiving his commission, he was stationed at Mackinaw, Michigan, where he married Mary, eldest daughter of the late Robert Stuart,

of Detroit. Previous to his residence at Mackinaw, it is not known that the claims of the gospel had been brought to bear on his conscience. But through the instrumentality of the little Mission Church on that island, he was led by the Spirit of God to enlist with his whole heart under the banner of the cross of Christ. From this time he went forth like "Luke the beloved physician," to labour to save lost souls, as well as to relieve suffering bodies. For three years during the Seminole war, he had charge of the general hospital at St. Augustine, Florida. Then, for seven years, he was stationed at Fort Snelling, at the Falls of St. Anthony, on the Mississippi, whence he was removed to Mexico, where he served as Medical Purveyor during the Mexican war. In each of these places, his name was enrolled as a professor of religion; and he was known as a living, active Christian, labouring to promote the cause of our Redeemer. He loved the doctrines held by the Presbyterian Church, believing them to be the doctrines of the gospel. Still, when his lot was cast with a church of any other denomination, he faltered not in his labours of love. His voice was heard in the meeting for social prayer, his influence was felt in the Sabbath school; and he regarded it as his privilege to contribute liberally towards the support of the institutions of religion, wherever evangelical truth was taught. Missionaries stationed near him, found in him countenance, sympathy and aid; and, when circumstances required, he shared his own home with the stranger, the enfeebled minister, or the needy of Christ's flock.

After being stationed at San Francisco in California, Jan., 1849, he was one of six who constituted the first Presbyterian Church in that place. The following extract from a letter written since his decease by an eminent lawyer, will show in what estimation he was there held.

"The Doctor was dear to me as a brother; I loved him most deeply. In my dark days,—and O they were so dark here in California, when the sun seemed to me to have gone down for ever! he, more than all others, was a guide, a friend and brother. More than all others, did he help me to look up. We prayed together to the same kind Father in heaven. We united our hands to build up the same little church. We talked together of dear ones far away. We were alike restless under the excitements of our California life. I parted from him with a most heavy heart; but we had laid many plans of future meetings, and we looked forward, hoping to meet again. After he went away, I thought we should be disappointed, for I was sick, and had a feeble hold on life. But I was spared, and he was taken away. If one was to be taken, I feel that he was best prepared. He was as true, consistent and humble in his Christian character, as any one I ever met; indeed, as I think of him, he seems to have been purer, gentler, more confiding in his faith, than any one I can recall."

In January, 1852, Dr. Turner was ordered to Texas, and first stationed at Austin. Here was a little church struggling for life. With great kindness, and prompt liberality, he encouraged the hearts, and strengthened the hands of its members. Wherever his lot was cast, he was careful to obey that precept of universal obligation, "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things."

A gentleman who knew him intimately, has thus written of him: "I frankly say, that I never knew an individual whom I more highly prized. It is rare to find a man of his piety anywhere; and it is especially rare to find a man of his determined piety in the army. Full to a remarkable degree of life and animation, his religion was a rock beneath his

feet, from off which he never departed for an instant. So thoroughly imbued was he with the very essence and principles of piety, that many, who indulged in infidel sneerings and profanity in every other presence, dared not to do it in his—not so much because they dreaded his spoken rebuke, as because the whole character and bearing of the man was a settled, intelligent and unconcealed abhorrence of impiety in all its forms. In liberality, in intelligent understanding of the doctrines of religion, and in habitual practice of its principles, he was as noble and complete a model of a Christian gentleman, as I ever saw, or ever expect to see."

After Dr. Turner was ordered to Corpus Christi, in January 1854, and had entered on the duties of his new office as Medical Director, he manifested a deep interest for the establishment of a Presbyterian church, and the erection of a house for public worship. These objects, however, could not then be effected, but what was in his heart, was doubtless accepted of heaven.

Most suddenly was Dr. Turner summoned to enter into the joy of our Lord. The yellow fever, which broke out at that post in October, 1854, first made its appearance in his family. His wife was prostrated, then a lovely daughter was stricken at his side, and while caring for them, he too was seized with the fearful malady. Delirium prevented the expression of his views as he entered the portals of eternity. His wife on recovering, awaked to consciousness to learn her sore bereavement, and to have repeated to her the few comforting words which had fallen on the ear of a faithful servant, "I am going home—all is well."

Other records may state his worth as a man, in the various relations of life; this speaks of him as a specimen of a *Christian officer*.

No. 184.

A CHAPTER FOR SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

John Barton was an excellent youth, and most earnestly desired to do all the good he could. He gave away almost all he had, and was always running hither and thither upon some good work. There was scarcely an institution in his native town, in which he had not taken some part; but nothing seemed to thrive with him. He could not make out the reasons why, but so it was; he was always trying and yet always failing.

There was a "Young Men's Society" in the town in which he lived, and he became its secretary. For a while he did wonders; he was here, and there, and everywhere; he got up a course of lectures; he instituted a Bible-class; he persuaded several who had at first looked coldly upon the matter, to become members; and everything flourished: but by the end of the year he became tired of it; some of the members opposed him in his wishes about a favourite measure; he became disgusted and retired not only from the secretaryship, but from membership altogether.

Thus, in a dozen different things, one after the other, did this well-intentioned youth fail; and amongst the dozen was the Sabbath-school. There was no doubt whatever but that young Barton had not succeeded with his class; when he first came, it was a quiet, attentive, regular class; but of late things had not gone on so well. This he was obliged to confess himself, when he reviewed the different members of it in his own mind. Peter Carlton had become a truant, Richard Bennett was irregular, John Desmond never knew his lessons, Charles Baker could not be made to understand, and all the rest inattentive; "In point of fact," said he to himself, "the class is going to ruin, and the best thing I can do is to give it up." At the same time, sundry

other misfortunes of the same kind, came rushing into his mind.

In the same school with John Barton was a teacher of the name of Pickering. Pickering was a poor man. The one suit of Sunday clothes had to last him for many years. He gained his bread by his own exertions as a carpenter. He had one of the most flourishing classes in the school. John Barton could not but perceive the great difference between the success of his neighbour and his own failure: so he determined to ask him how it was.

"How is it, Mr. Pickering," said he, after the afternoon school, "that my class is in such a wretched state, and yours thrives so well? How do you get on?"

"The P—s have every thing to say to it," said Pickering; "at least 'tis by the P—s I succeeded."

"The P—s!" said John Barton in astonishment, who had never heard of any persons or things called by such a name,—"and what are they?"

"They're what help me on," answered Pickering, apparently determined to sharpen the curiosity of his questioner.

"I never heard of them before," observed John Barton, with a strange look of curiosity and astonishment in his face.

"There is many a Sabbath-school teacher that knows nothing about them," answered the carpenter; "but I never got on till I made acquaintance with them."

"Be so kind as to explain yourself," said John Barton, "I really cannot understand what you mean."

Mr. Pickering had now thoroughly aroused his hearer's curiosity and attention, which was the end he had in view; so, looking him straight in the face, and extending the fingers of his left hand, he began slowly to tell off on them, with the forefinger of his right hand, the mysterious P—s.

"One P., Mr. Barton, is *Patience*, another is *Perseverance*, another *Prayer*, and another is *Preparation*. These P—s are great things," continued the carpenter,

"and they'll do wonders if one has them always near him; and if I may make bold enough to say it, Mr. Barton, perhaps the reason the class don't get on with you is for the want of them."

It was impossible for John Barton to be offended with the worthy man, although his conscience presssed him very hard, and he felt that he knew very little of the P—s; he determined to think the matter over, and see how things really stood, before he gave up his class. That evening he catechized himself on each of the P—s mentioned by the carpenter.

Quest. "Have I been Patient?"

Answer, by John Barton's conscience. "You were in a fret with John Desmond, for not being able to repeat his lesson this morning; you lost your temper with James Brown, for bringing apples to school; you gave Ned Warren a rap on the side of the head, for looking about, and thus you lost influence over them all."

Quest. "Have I been Persevering?"

Answer, by John Barton's conscience. "You gave up the Young Men's Society; you remember *that*—(and then, a pause, as much as to ask John Barton, Don't you?)—you contrived to send Dick Joyce out of your class, because he was slow in reading, and you would'nt be at the trouble to help him on; you used to visit the children at home, but you have given that up; you are not *persevering* nor anything of the kind."

Quest. "Have I been Praying?"

Answer, by John Barton's conscience. "How can you ask such a question? You have never offered a single prayer on behalf of the class; nor have you asked for a blessing for yourself in teaching. There is no doubt, John Barton, but that you have not been *praying*."

Quest. "Have I been Preparing?"

Answer, by John Barton's conscience. "You have very often gone to school without having ever even looked at the lesson; you have been known on your arrival there to ask a fellow-teacher what the lesson

was; you have just trusted to what you could think of at the moment, and you have been a miserbly uninteresting teacher, and that's the reason why Ned Warren looks about."

He betook himself to make resolutions on the several P—s. Until these had been put in force for some little time, and he saw how things got on, he determined not to give up his class.

John Barton became *patient*, and John Desmond got ashamed of not having his lesson prepared, and in the course of two months repeated eight verses without missing a word.

John Barton became *persevering*, and after a few weeks' visiting amongst his children, he found his class grow large again. Mrs. Crook was busy, and couldn't see him, but he called again; Mrs. Barlow was rather saucy, but he stayed with her, talking about her Jemmy, until she became quite civil, and from that day, she herself saw Jemmy off in time.

John Barton *prayed*, and he felt wonderfully strengthened for his work; he prayed for the children, and he couldn't tell exactly how, but they seemed to love him more.

John Barton *prepared;* and Ned Warren, who had often been rapped on the head, looked about no more, but fixed his eyes on his teacher, as though he would look him through and through.

And finally, John Barton became a happy and successful teacher, and his class loved him and improved daily in knowledge and good conduct, through the influence of the FOUR P—S.

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
NO. 265 CHESTNUT STREET.

No. 185.

WATCH AND PRAY.

It is very noticeable how often this duty is enjoined in the word of God; how careful our Saviour was to impress it upon his followers, to urge them again and again, to watch and pray. This is significant and decisive of corresponding danger and peril. Christ knew it. He felt it, for he was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin. He has given us the most solemn warnings in respect to our danger, and the most instructive example as to the way of safety. Although he was himself pure and holy, he watched and prayed, continuing even all night in prayer to God. Let us think of this example in the time of our severe trial, and lift our hearts to him in confidence and hope. He who struggled all night in prayer, and sweat as it were great drops of blood, will easily sympathise with us in our struggles, and be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Yea more, he will through these very conflicts and sufferings, develope in us a quiet greatness, a calm reliance and sweet repose in his goodness and love, which we should not otherwise experience. The great Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering; and it is by participation in his sufferings that we enter into his rest. It is not the pleasure of God to remove us from temptations and trials in this world, but to give us grace and strength to resist and overcome them. This is the plan of infinite wisdom and

goodness. Let us accept it with submission and gratitude, counting it all joy even, "when we fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of our faith worketh patience." But we are to remember that our own strength is weakness, and our wisdom folly. We are to rely on divine strength and seek deliverance and salvation, in the way of God's appointment, by watching and praying, and in no other way can we hope for safety.

These are the two great defences in the Christian warfare. We enter upon the conflict with them, and never lay them aside, till the great victory is won and the enemy is entirely vanquished. They are the defences with which our Saviour warded off the fiery darts of the Devil, and he has left them for the protection of his followers. They must be united against the temptations by which we are surrounded. They are of little service when separated, and avail nothing against our spiritual foes. Watchfulnes without prayer is presumption. It is but half of the command, and of itself cannot secure the tempted soul. So prayer without watchfulness is solemn mockery of God, and brings not the divine blessing to sustain and comfort the heart. In the great Christian warfare, in the protracted struggle for mastery in all things, over the world, the flesh, and the Devil, the two must go together. This is absolutely necessary for our success. It is God's appointed method. It is the way in which he will shield us and defend us. We must accept it or perish. There is no alternative. It is a law in his moral kingdom, and must be obeyed. Food and drink are necessary for animal life. Take away one, and the other is of little account. The body soon dies. So watching *and* praying are necessary for the spiritual life. Take away one, and the other fails to sustain the soul. We repeat it again, the two must be united. The Christian must all along through this world watch and pray.

He must watch in the first place, against his inward foes. The heart of man in its natural state is deceitful above all things and *desperately* wicked. The Holy Spirit in regeneration breaks the reigning power of sin, but sanctifies the heart gradually, and developes the Christian character through struggle and conflict. Evil thoughts and desires are springing up in his unsanctified heart, and these, unless carefully watched and restrained, lead to evil purposes and forbidden action. There is within the Christian a strong garrison of mighty warriors, seeking every opportunity to regain what is lost, and entrench themselves more strongly.

In the second place he must watch against his outward foes. He must learn their character and strength, and not be ignorant of their devices. The world with its riches, and honours, and pleasures; the Devil, wily and malignant, going about seeking whom he may devour, are ever ready and seeking to destroy the spiritual life in the Christian, to regain their former place and dominion. They have great advantage from former occupancy and intimate alliance with his inward foes. His old sinful associations and habits too are all against the life of godliness in his soul.

Now can any Christian, after learning the strength, the character and plans of his adversaries, feel that there is not need of the greatest care and watchfulness? Indeed, can he fail to feel that, in addition to all his own efforts, he must have divine aid, or perish? Let him consider the weakness and treachery of his heart. How often has it deceived and failed him! Let him consider the circumstances in which he has fallen, and be more circumspect and cautious in regard to them in future.

But this is not all. It is only the first part of the duty. He must, then, in addition, knowing his adversaries, seeing his danger and feeling his weakness, seek divine support and

deliverance with the greatest importunity and perseverance. He must pray, and, if need be, continue all night in prayer, as his Saviour did. Prayer must be ardent and constant, the very habit and life of the soul. Indeed, he must, on the one hand, watch with the same care and vigilance as if everything depended on himself; and on the other hand, pray with the same constancy and importunity as if everything depended on God. *This* is Christian watchfulness and prayer. This is in accordance with the precept and example of the Divine Master. It is safe for the soul and pleasing to God; but all inattention to our danger, or remisness in guarding against it, or indifference in prayer, is sinful, and perilous. It violates the command and rejects the example of our Lord. If it was necessary for him who was always pure and holy, thus to watch and pray, much more is it for us his sinful disciples. We cannot otherwise be saved. We must use the means if we would secure the end—the salvation of our souls. Our only hope and safety in this struggle for immortality is in Jesus Christ. Through him we shall be more than conquerors. His grace is sufficient for us. But we must use that grace, we must work out our salvation, we must co-operate with the Holy Spirit in the *way of his appointment.* Herein is our deliverance. Oh, let us thus live and labour! Thus let us draw nigh unto Christ, cherishing his Spirit in our hearts, and no more grieving his infinite tenderness and love.

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NO. 265 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

No. 186.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

A GOOD writer says that praise is "confession and acknowledgment of the great and wonderful excellencies and perfections that are in God." He also says that thanksgiving consists in "acknowledging and confessing, with gladness, the benefits and mercies which God bestows either upon ourselves or others." These definitions may be strictly correct, yet the distinction between these duties is not carefully preserved in Scripture. They are much alike and run into each other. We cannot easily praise God for what he is, without thanking him for what he does. Daniel, (ii. 23,) used both words: "I thank and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers." So also the Psalmist, (c. 4,) "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his cóurts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." Again, in Psa. cxlvii. 7, "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God."

Praise is no less obligatory than prayer. Thanksgiving is as fitting as supplication. If the needy ask for mercies, the enriched should acknowledge favours. All the duties of religion sooner or later give joy; but the soul is always gladsome when it is able to make devout mention of the kindness of the Lord. No man is miserable while heartily engaged in praising God. Even to the afflicted saints God kindly mingles the cheerful with the mournful, the joyful with the awful, praise with prayer.

The moral sense of every right-minded man approves of making some acknowledgment for benefits. Even when another man's servant does a kindness to a well-bred man, he thanks him. And all the forms of religion, of which we know anything, have made provision for praise. Thus the Philistines said: "Our God hath delivered Sampson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their God." Judg. xvi. 23, 24. In like manner also Belshazzar, and his princes, his wives and his concubines, "praised the gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." In all forms of religion some provision has been made for thanksgivings.

Our God is the greatest and the best of beings. He is God alone. There is no God beside him, or with him, or like him. From him cometh down every good and perfect gift. In him we live, and move, and have our being. Salvation is by his grace. Eternal life is his gift. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. To him belong the highest praises, the most hearty thanks. There is no fear that any will extol him too much.

This duty is never performed aright by those who are merely aroused to it by some striking event, but usually have no sense of God's glory or mercy. We should regard the daily operations of the divine hand. We should long and often dwell upon the Lord's excellencies and benefits. We should seek clearer views of all he is and of all he does. We should especially strive to impress on our minds some just sense of the greatness, the riches, the freeness of all his blessings. We deserve no good thing. O let us stir up our souls and all that is within us to bless the Lord and to magnify his name.

Some have an occasional sense of God's perfections and bounties, but they soon forget his works. Every blessing

should be recorded on the fleshy tables of the heart. This is not easily done. We are by nature averse to all that reminds us of the Rock of our salvation. Some seem to have so good memories that they forget hardly any thing but the mercies of the Lord. They remember wrongs, trifles, vanities, but pass by infinite glories and gifts unspeakable.

We must also beware of a merely intellectual perception of these things. Our hearts must not be cold. We must say as David: "I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart." While we muse, let the fire burn. Great mercies should arouse strong emotions. It is a shame to have no more to say in honour of the Father of our spirits and of our mercies, than of him, who is merely a kind neighbour.

True gratitude will notice small as well as great events. An excellent writer of the seventeenth century puts thankfulness for a little mercy, among the best evidences of piety. Nothing is acceptable to God without a right state of the heart. Every one rightly affected will be far from contemning the least thing, which he supposes will take from the honour due to the Almighty.

Nor should our gratitude be dormant, nor our praise silent. So thought the Psalmist: "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever;" "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise;" "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard;" "Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders;" "I will praise thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee." Psalms xxx. 12; li. 15; lxvi. 8; cvii. 32; cxxxviii. 1.

So far from our praises being silent, they should be expressed in songs: "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving." Psa. lxix. 30. "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of the saints. Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds." Psa. cxlix. 1, 5. In like manner the apostle says to Christians: "Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. v. 18—20.

In this blessed work all should take a part. No creature can rightly withhold from God this tribute. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." Let the little ones cry, "Hosannah to the Son of David." Matt. xxi. 15, 16 "Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise ye him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters that lie above the heavens. . . . . Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps; fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word; mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl; kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens, old men and children. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord." Psalms cxlviii. & cl. Solemn religious services should mark our gratitude. If the heart is full, the tongue will not always be still, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Four times in one Psalm it is said, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

Our thanks for mercies may be often best expressed by our kindness to the poor. If God is good to us, let us be good to others. We receive freely; let us freely give. He, who fills our hearts with food and gladness, would have us to be his imitators. In this work of love let us be liberal. "When men proportion their charities to their estates, God often proportions their estates to their charities." In doing good to others, we must carefully guard against selfishness. Let us watch our motives. "Judas and the poor widow both brought money to the temple." Keep your heart with all diligence. No labour of love shall lose its reward. Our charities are best when they demand some sacrifice on our part. The poor widow gave all her living, and so cast in more than they all. Do all the good you can. "Beneficence is the salt of wealth." Let us give as Christ gave. And beware of delay. "To-morrow is the day when fools become wise, when sinners turn saints, when the churl becomes liberal." Make little of God, and he will make little of you. *Do* nothing, and you will *be* nothing of account. "Let our thanks-giving be united with thanks-doing; then we shall be accepted."

And as God's glories are unchangeable, and his compassions infinite, we should never cease to praise him. Let us say with one of old, "My praise shall be continually of thee." "Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever." Psa. lxxi. 6; cxlv. 2. So in the New Testament, Paul says, "By him, (Christ Jesus) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Let there be an end of our praises when God ceases to be glorious. Till then let our lips extol his holy name.

Frequency is the life of all genuine devotions. If we should "pray without ceasing," why should we not give

thanks always? Perpetual streams of mercy demand perpetual songs. "While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being." "My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise, all the day long." Psa. cxlvi. 2; xxxv. 28.

In all circumstances we should speak God's praise. In the depths of affliction Job says, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In deep distress Jeremiah says, "Wherefore should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" The truth is, "Every thing is well and shall be well, when it is well between us and God."

The saints seldom have a sorer trial than in death; yet even here God often gives them such victory as to enable them to cry, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" On his dying bed Dr. Finley was asked what he saw in eternity to excite such vehement desires in his soul. He replied, "I see a God of love and goodness; I see the fulness of my Mediator; I see the love of Jesus. O to be dissolved! to be with him! I long to be clothed with the complete righteousness of Christ!" The common judgment of God's people is, that life has some advantages, but that to depart and be with Christ is far better. So they sing even while passing over Jordan.

The obligations to this duty are many and powerful. The relations subsisting between God and us demand as much. If he is our God, let him be our praise. Deut. x. 21. We are his creatures. He made us, and not we ourselves. We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To this hour he has kept us. Blessed be his name for ever and ever.

And if creation and providence demand our songs, what shall we say of redemption? Who can tell our obligation

as sinners bought with atoning blood? Unless we are lost to all right feeling, we must glorify our Lord and Saviour. Surely, here praise is comely for the upright.

The explicit command of God binds us to this duty. It is said that prayer is in some way spoken of in Scripture more than five hundred times. It cannot be doubted that praise is noticed with equal frequency. Indeed, praise is *commanded* much oftener than prayer. Let any one read the last six psalms, and he will see the great urgency of God's word on this business. See also Psalms xxii. 23, lxvii. 3, lxix. 34, and lxxiv. 21, and many other places.

Praising God has been a prescribed service in all dispensations of true religion, and among all orders of holy creatures, and shall so continue for ever. Prayer, preaching, fasting, and alms-giving shall cease at death; but praise and thanksgiving shall be given to God while eternity endures.

"I'll praise my Maker with my breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures."

Paul argues that charity is greater than faith or hope, because it never faileth. If this reasoning should be applied to acts of devotion, it would put praise at the head of the list.

The chief thing required in this work is a right state of the affections. Then all else is easy. The heart being right, praise will be natural. To have a disposition to shew forth God's honour is itself an unspeakable blessing. It is better to be in jail at Philippi, praying and singing praises to God, than to sit, hardened in pride, on the thrones of the world. If Jeshurun waxes fat, he is apt to kick. "Prosperous prov-

idences are, for the most part, a dangerous state to the soul. The moon never suffers an eclipse but at the full. If we are duly humble we will extol God's name; for "thankfulness is the homage of humility." "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel."

This duty is very delightful. It is itself a feast. It makes the face to shine, and the heart to leap for joy. This is one great advantage of divine ordinances and worship. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee." Richard Baxter says, "He that knows not that this work is pleasant, is unacquainted with it. If there be any thing pleasant in this world, it is the praises of God, that flow from a believing, loving soul, that is full of the sense of the mercies and goodness and excellencies of the Lord." If we ever get a better emblem of heaven, than when we unite in the devout and public praises of God, I know not what it is.

And he, who has no heart for lauding the Most High must be miserable. There are four sorts of persons, who cannot be comforted; an ambitious man, who sees preferment fleeing away; a gay beauty, whose charms are fading; a rich sinner, whose life is ending; and a vile ingrate, who never feels his heart swelling with gratitude to God.

All God's enemies dishonour him by their silence, or by hard speeches against him. Surely, then, his friends should give him all the praise they can. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." Psa. l. 23. Whatever is known to honour God cannot be safely denied him.

As "deep calleth unto deep," so motive answers to motive, providence to providence, and Scripture to Scripture, inviting us to lively gratitude, hearty thanksgiving, and the highest praise. One mercy calls to another, and says to us,

Praise ye the Lord. Some of our blessings are temporal, others eternal. Some are personal, others national. Some date before our birth, others since. Some belong to childhood and youth, others to riper years. If we are real Christians, we are in possession of some mercies which shall last for ever. It was God who gave us our birth in a Christian country, and so saved us from the sorrows of those who hasten after another god. He gave us our goodly heritage. He crowned our lives with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Among our spiritual blessings three stand very conspicuous. One is Jesus Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift! Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. He is the first-born among many brethren. He deserves everlasting confidence. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ! This theme arouses all heaven.

Another pre-eminent mercy is the gift of God's Spirit. He is the infallible teacher of all believers. He guides them into all truth. He purifies their hearts. He comforts them exceedingly. He gives them a heart to pray, and stirs up those groanings which cannot be uttered. He keeps alive the flame of love in their hearts when temptation rolls in like a flood. He gives them the victory over the world, over sin, over death. He makes them more than conquerors.

The third of these great gifts is God's word. We speak very far within the limits of sobriety when we call the Bible an incomparable volume. The best songs, histories, sermons, proverbs, parables, laws, counsels, warnings, promises, encouragements, and doctrines are found in this matchless book. Its penmen lived in different ages, extending through

fifteen centuries. Some of them were learned, others unlearned; some bond, others free; some were kings, some sailors, some publicans, some warriors, some herdsmen, some old, some young; but they all teach the same blessed truths. No good man ever regretted time given to the study or elucidation of the Scriptures. One lately bade the world farewell on heathen ground. Before he died he said, "For myself, I feel no satisfaction with any part of my work equal to that of preparing and teaching the word of God. Heaven and earth may pass away; human systems and human wisdom may pass away; but the word of God abideth for ever." Many will here recognize the testimony of Amos Sutton.

And as in these days many are labouring to destroy confidence in our translation of the Bible, and to make men think that unless they can get a better, they cannot have God's word, it may be well to say a few things. Dr. Adam Clarke says, that "for accuracy and general fidelity, competent judges allow that this translation greatly exceeds all modern versions, either English or foreign." The learned Capellus says, that it is "so agreeable to the original, as that we might well choose among others to follow it, were it not our own, and established by authority among us." Many other learned men have said as much.

Right treatment of God's word, and Spirit, and only begotten Son will end in salvation. To this intent they were given, that we "might not perish, but have everlasting life." If such blessings call not for the loudest and highest songs, then we can never reason conclusively on any moral subject. Well might all men adopt the language of Bishop Hall and say, "O my God, I am justly ashamed to think what favours I have received from thee, and what poor returns I have made to thee! Truly, Lord, I must needs

say, thou hast thought nothing either in earth or in heaven too good for me. . . . . O thou, who hast been so bountiful in heaping thy rich mercies upon me, vouchsafe to me yet one gift more : give me grace and power to improve all the gifts to the glory of the Giver."

Richard Baxter gives five reasons for this duty. One is that, "the praises of God exercise our highest graces. Praise is the very breath of love, and joy, and gratitude. It hath the most pure, and spiritual, and elevating effect on the soul." Another is that "to be much employed in the praise of God doth tend exceedingly to vanquish all hurtful doubts, and fears, and sorrows." Again, such a life of praise will make religion sweet and easy to us, and make the work of God a pleasure to us. Besides, "no duty is more pleasing to God than the cheerful praises of his servants. He loveth your prayers, tears, and groans; but your praises much more." The last reason is, that to be often praising God will correct the false notion of the world respecting religion, and show them that it is neither morose nor gloomy, but has its rich and peculiar joys and consolations.

One great object of public worship is to incite us to secret devotion. It would be a great matter if our private devotions partook more of a cheerful and thankful cast. It is a great gift to be able when alone to find pleasure in singing or chanting God's praises. And our personal praising of God would well prepare us for a more hearty and profitable participation in the solemn duties of the great congregation.

HALLELUJAH.

PRAISE.

PAUL was one whose religion did not confine itself to the heart. He *gave* thanks as well as *felt* them. He *offered* praise. You will hear people say there is never a day, and scarcely an hour, that they do not feel grateful to God; and yet they rarely, if ever, give any devout expression to their gratitude. The duty of solemn praise they seem to overlook altogether. But what should a man do with his tongue, if he do not therewith bless God? It is remarkable, that in the Bible the tongue is called the glory of the man, (Psa. cviii. 1,) not merely because it is the organ and interpreter of that reason by which we are distinguished above the brutes, but mainly, perhaps, because with it we utter the praises of the Most High, and show forth his mighty works.

There is no way in which benevolence more beautifully displays itself than in thanking God for his favours to others. The world is rather, by the bounty of God to others, excited to envy and discontent. But, to rejoice with them that do rejoice is necessary, in order to weep with them that weep. He who has no sympathy in our joys, has none in our sorrows.

It indicates a sad state of things in any church when the business of praising God is attempted to be performed by representation, and when one of the objects in coming to a church is to hear fine music, rather than to celebrate, in one united anthem, the praises of the Most High. Why, we might as well go one step farther, and depute a few of the congregation to *feel* all the gratitude that is due from us, as well as to *express* it. Nothing is here intended against a choir, but only against the exclusive commitment of this part of worship to a choir.—*Nevins.*

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No. 187.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO-DAY?

A QUESTION FOR SABBATH MORNING.

DEAR FRIEND, the holy Sabbath has again dawned upon you. Again are you released from the toil of the week. To-day you are both commanded and privileged to rest from labour. How great the blessing! How precious the opportunity to refresh your exhausted body, and to reinvigorate your over-wrought and excited spirit! What are your plans for the day? How do you propose to pass its sacred hours?

1. *Do you intend to go forth and hear the News?* Then, by all means go to the house of God, where his people will assemble to hear glad tidings of great joy. The minister will tell you the news. He has great and glorious news for you—information of the highest importance; and compared with it, all other intelligence is of little moment. He can tell you of A GREAT BATTLE, and A GLORIOUS VICTORY: THE TRIUMPHS OF THE GREATEST CAPTAIN the world ever saw: the mighty deeds of Jesus, the Captain of salvation, in conquering the great enemy of God and man: "That by his obedience unto death, he hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil, and delivered them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15: That Christ, by the shedding of his precious blood upon the cross of Calvary, hath re-

deemed us from the curse of the law. Under that law, you are condemned as a sinner, and made liable to all misery in time and in eternity. But Christ having met and discharged all the demands of the law against you, there will be offered to sinners this day, a full and free salvation in his name. The message which the preacher is commissioned to declare to you to-day is: that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" that although "we all like sheep have gone astray, and turned every one to his own way," yet "the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all."—"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." *Peace* is therefore proclaimed this day; "Peace on earth, good will to men." Peace, ratified upon Calvary, in the blood of Jesus, and accepted by faith in that blood, will become to you "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Is not this glorious news for a poor, perishing sinner? Will you not go at the appointed hour, and hear more about it?

2. *But perhaps you intend to-day to visit your friends?* If so, you can accomplish that object better at the house of God, than in the homes of your earthly acquaintances. The minister of the Gospel can introduce you to a FRIEND indeed, "A friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" one who has always known you most intimately, and who waits to do you the greatest kindness. His love is large and free. He will give you a new heart and a new name. He has for you exhaustless riches, and a crown of glory. He will accept you, poor, and sinful, and miserable as you are, and never forsake you. His grace shall be sufficient for you. He will be your God and Guide even unto death. And then his

Omnipotent Arm shall give you the victory over every foe, and conduct you in triumph to the bright inheritance which he purchased for you with his precious blood. This dear friend is Jesus, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world—the Lion of the tribe of Judah—the Man of sorrows—the Prince of the kings of the earth—God over all, blessed for ever! O go! this day accept his friendship, and rejoice for ever in his love!

3. *It may be, you have thought of going forth into the country, to gather fruit and flowers, or to consider the prospect of the approaching harvest.* Then, fail not to assemble with the congregation to hear the Gospel, and worship God. The preacher may tell you of One sweeter than the rose of Sharon, and fairer than the lily of the valley, and who is "among the sons, as the apple-tree among the trees." Go, and seek him with all your heart. He will "lead you to his banqueting house, and his banner over you shall be love." And the preacher can tell you all about "*the harvest*" *which* "*is the end of the world*"—that at that time, "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." The minister can explain to you, that the law of every other harvest is the law of this: namely, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. v. 7, 8. O then, be not deceived! Strive to make immediate and diligent preparation for the great harvest of the earth. Strive to receive the good seed of God's saving truth in an honest heart—pray for his blessing, that it may bring forth fruit a hundred fold; and you shall be gathered home at last, as a shock of corn fully ripe, to be bound in the bundle of life.

4. *Peradventure, your engagements have been so pressing all the week, that you have lacked time to examine the state of your business; and that you purpose spending some portion of this holy Sabbath in looking over your accounts, and considering your gains and losses.* A very important matter, truly, for the Sabbath, or any other day; that is, *the examination of your account with God, your Maker and Judge.* God's house of worship, then, and not the counting-room, is your right place to-day; and the most suitable book for your perusal to-day, is not *the Ledger*, but the inspired word of God, the Bible. There you will find a question (Mark viii. 36), which, it is highly important you should at once answer correctly: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" that is, *to buy it back after it is lost in hell?* Consider then, how poor and worthless are all your acquisitions, if you have not included in them eternal life, by faith in the Lord Jesus! And how easily may you repair, or sustain any loss that does not involve the loss of your immortal soul!

What is the great object of your desire and effort? Is it to obtain the things of this world? Listen to the counsel of the Redeemer: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." Yes! Jesus, "the Son of Man," will bestow this great and precious gift upon you, without money, and without price; for, whatever may be the amount of your earthly possessions, you are, in the sight of God, if unconverted, "poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked," —hopelessly in debt to God's holy law, and utterly bankrupt of any ability to meet its just demands, or to deliver yourself from its fatal penalty. God knows all this; he

knows you cannot purchase his salvation, and therefore he offers it to you as the free gift of his sovereign grace. Will you not go *to-day*, and accept it? *But you desire to repair all your losses, and to become rich.* That is quite natural. Well, turn to your Bible, and read (1 Timothy vi. 9, 10) the consequence of indulging that desire. "They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." "But the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." Prov. x. 22. Will you allow this day to pass, without seeking the unsearchable riches of Christ?

5. *Possibly, you intend to-day to make a journey of business or pleasure.* If so, you intend to aid, countenance, and encourage, by your example and patronage, a large number of your fellow sinners to trample upon the authority of God, who has said: "*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*" By this Sabbath travelling, you are riveting the fetters which a despotic public opinion has bound upon your fellow-man, whose employment it is to convey you; while you gratify the cupidity of the mercenary and corrupt, who sell for gold the time which belongs to God! Consider, then, whether you can make this journey with a good conscience, and with a well-grounded expectation that God will protect you safely to its termination. If not, by all means defer it till to-morrow. And let your journey to-day be to the house of God, where you may learn, that you are already entered upon an important journey—that you are travelling with far greater rapidity than the perilous speed of "Rail-road Express"—and that you may to-day be very

near its termination. This journey is the momentous journey of life—its termination the grave, whither we all haste—its final result an eternity of joy or woe! Fellow traveller, are you prepared for this?

6. *But finally, you are, perhaps, a candidate for public favour, and desire to use this holy day in promoting your election.* Then, the house of God is the right place for you, for you are indeed a candidate, a candidate for joy or sorrow, for God's favour or frown, for heaven or hell. If you do not know which of these alternatives is to be your eternal portion, the Saviour's declaration may relieve the painful uncertainty: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that is not with me, is against me." "He that taketh not his cross and followeth me, cannot be my disciple." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." How do these tests affect you? What do they reveal of your true condition in the sight of God? Are you still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity? Then flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the Gospel. "Escape for thy life, lest thou be consumed." Or do you entertain a feeble and doubtful hope of pardon and salvation? If so, rest no longer in uncertainty: "*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*" Attend both the public and private means of grace. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit, that you may be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and created in him unto good works. *Seek the Lord in his house to-day.* "Behold now is the accepted time: behold now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2.

APOLOGIES FOR TRAVELLING ON THE SABBATH.

Some of those who do the *work* of journeying on the Sabbath, do not condescend to make any apology for it. They care neither for the day, nor for Him who hallowed it. With these we have nothing to do. Our business is with those who, admitting the general obligation of the Sabbath, and knowing or suspecting Sunday travelling to be a sin, offer apologies which they hope may justify the act in their case, or else go far towards extenuating the criminality of it. I propose to submit to the judgment of my readers some of the *excuses* for this sin, as I cannot help calling the breach of the fourth commandment, which from time to time I have heard alleged.

I would premise that I know of no sin which men are so *sorry* for before it is done, and so ready to apologize for afterwards. I cannot tell how many persons, about to travel on the Sabbath, have answered me that they were very *sorry* to do it; and yet they have immediately gone and done it. They have repented, and then sinned—just like Herod, who was very sorry to put John the Baptist to death, and then immediately sent an executioner to bring his head. It does not diminish the criminality of an act that is perpetrated with some degree of regret—and yet the presence of such a regret is considered by many as quite a tolerable excuse.

One gentleman who was sorry to travel on the Sabbath, added, I recollect, that it was *against his principles* to make such a use of the day. I wonder then that he should do it —that he should deliberately practice in opposition to his principles. But I was still more surprised that he should think to excuse his practice by alleging its contrariety to his principles. What are principles for but to regulate practice;

and if they have not fixedness and force enough for this, of what use are they? A man's principles may as well be in favour of Sabbath-breaking as his practice; and certainly, it constitutes a better apology for a practice that is in conformity to one's principles, than that it is at variance with them.

Another gave pretty much the same reason for his conduct in different words: "it is not my *habit*," said he, "to travel on the Sabbath." It was only his *act*. He did not uniformly do it. He only occasionally did it. A man must be at a loss for reasons, who alleges an apology for travelling one Sabbath, that he does not travel other Sabbaths. The habit of obedience forms no excuse for the act of disobedience.

An intelligent lady, who was intending to travel on the Sabbath, volunteered this exculpation of herself. She said she had travelled one Sabbath already since she left home, and she supposed it was no worse to travel on another. What then? Are not two sins worse than one?

Another, (and she was a lady too,) said she could read good books by the way; "and you know," said she, "that we can have as good thoughts in one place as another." I assented, but could not help thinking that the persons employed in conveying her might not find their situation as favourable to devout reading and meditation. This I suppose, did not occur to her.

Another person said that he would never *commence* a journey on the Sabbath; but when once set out, he could see no harm in proceeding. But I, for my part, could not see the mighty difference between setting out on the Sabbath, and going on on the Sabbath. My perceptions were so obtuse that I could not discern the one to be travelling, and the other to be equivalent to rest.

No. 188.

HINTS TO PARENTS

BY A COMMITTEE OF SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Dear Friends:—Suffer the teachers of your children to remind you of the responsibility laid upon you by God at their birth, and solemnly undertaken by you at their baptism, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Of that responsibility, it is not the wish, and it is not in any degree in the power, of any Sabbath-school teacher to relieve you. No Sabbath-class is so much in its place, as that which is formed by a family, around a father's knee.

Yet we, too, have a duty to your children. We offer you our help and our prayers. And we believe that it is just the parents who are themselves most earnest in this duty, in the midst of their families, who will most thankfully help and encourage the work of the Sabbath-school.

Our work is a work of love. We have no other end to serve, and we seek nothing else for our hire, but the good of the children whom God has given you. Instead of spending our Sabbath hours alone, seeking food from God for our own souls, we are willing to give a part of our time, summer and winter, to meet with your children in the Sabbath-school. We want to warn them of the wrath that is coming upon them, as guilty sinners in the sight of a holy God; and to tell them of the way still open to salvation and life eternal, through faith in the blood and righteousness of Jesus.

What most of all we would watch and pray for is nothing less than the *conversion* of your children. We speak not now of the unconscious babe; we speak of the child who is old enough to know right from wrong,—to know what it is to love God, and what it is to hate him. Have you ever before taken the solemn truth home to your consciences,—that *nothing less than conversion* can make his soul safe for eternity? If your child dies without a renewed heart,—without having received and rested upon Jesus for salvation,—*that child is lost.*

Dear friends, you may forget this thought; you may try to put it away from you, and to hide it from your consciences; but you cannot change that sentence, spoken to Nicodemus by the Lord Jesus Christ,—"*He that believeth not is condemned already.*" (John iii. 18.) Are your children the children of God? have they been "born again?" have they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and are they shewing this by loving holiness and hating sin? *If they have not,* the word of God bears witness against them that they are *condemned already.* When you see them going out and coming in,—when you see them happy at play, or sitting beside you in your homes, remember that these, your beloved children, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, dear to you as your own souls,—so long as they are out of Christ, are the enemies of God,—children of wrath, *condemned already;* and if death finds them in this state,—heart-breaking thought!—they are *lost for ever.*

Christian parents! do *you* keep this truth before you? Are you not too ready to be satisfied if your children are affectionate and obedient, and attentive to the lessons which are given them to learn, while all the time you cannot but fear that they are *dead in trespasses and sins?* A teacher was once urging upon a little girl the necessity of her con-

version to God. Her mother, a Christian woman, was present at the time. When he was going away, the mother said, "Ah, yes! it is pleasant to *read* about early conversions, but——." Perhaps she had never truly believed, evidently she had never *expected*, that God could change her child's heart at so early an age. Now if we do not in faith *pray* for this, can we wonder that we do not get it? How true it is that God does few great works in our Sabbath-schools "because of our unbelief." Is it *your* daily cry and prayer, that the Holy Ghost would turn the hearts of your beloved children? Do you daily realize the unchangeable truth, which sooner or later will come upon you, that *except they be born again*, they can never, never see the kingdom of God?

Let us now kindly ask you, ARE YOU DOING ALL YOU CAN TO HELP THE SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHER, IN TRYING TO BRING YOUR CHILDREN TO CHRIST? Our interests here are one: what is gain to us, is gain to you. May the following questions, answered to your consciences as in the sight of God, be blessed to lead you to the path of duty in this matter, or to encourage and cheer you, if you are already in it.

1. DO YOU MAKE IT YOUR DUTY THAT YOUR CHILDREN BE REGULAR IN THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE SCHOOL? Do you never allow them to be absent without a proper cause, or perhaps without cause at all? You know that it must be hurtful to the scholar to be, every now and then, though in perfect health, missing from his place in the class. And is it kind to *ourselves?* The anxious teacher spends a secret hour, taken, perhaps, from his time of necessary sleep, in thinking of simple truths to tell your children,—in searching the store-house of God's word for food convenient for

them. He goes to the school on the Sabbath, with a praying, longing heart: he takes with him the store which he has gathered: but when he gets there, he finds, alas! that his little guest has not come.

And it is sad to think what excuses are sometimes made to serve. Are parents never guilty of encouraging the sinful pride of their children, by keeping them from school because they think their *clothes* are not good enough, when the children themselves are willing to go? Or are they never tempted to give *false* reasons of absence? Have they never, to hide their neglect of a known duty, been tempted to add sin to sin, by sending their child to school on the following Sabbath, with something in his mouth at least *very like* a lie? Will Sabbath tea-drinkings, or Sabbath walkings, or the careless waste of God's hours in what they call harmless enjoyment, serve them as a defence at the judgment-seat, for having kept from their children the bread of life? Or even now, are they not sometimes, when alone with God, uneasy when conscience tells them how little interest they take in the Sabbath-school?

Remember, dear friends, that it is "a word spoken in season" which God most frequently blesses for the conversion of a soul. How can you tell but that the very time when your child is needlessly absent from his class, the word may be spoken which, had he been present, might have reached his conscience, and awakened him from the sleep of sin?

2. DO YOU MAKE IT YOUR DUTY THAT THE LESSONS GIVEN OUT HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY LEARNED BY YOUR CHILDREN? Are you doing all you can in this way to make them profit by the Sabbath-school? As one sin leads to another, so we fear that the neglect of this duty is often the

cause which leads to the neglect of that mentioned before. The week has passed away, and the lesson has not been learned. The parent knows this; and he does not care that his child should be noticed for it in the class. The child knows this, and he is ashamed to meet the eye of his teacher, or to stand up dumb before his companions. Why should it be so, dear friends? It would cost you but little time, and little pains—a few minutes each day would be enough—to see that during the week the lessons were carefully learned: and when the Sabbath came around, your boys or girls would go to school with a light heart, glad to meet their companions, and glad to meet the kind eye of their teacher. No wonder the child has no heart for the Sabbath-school, who comes with his lessons altogether, or partly, unprepared.

And may we not here also, dear friends, ask you to help us *for our own sakes?* It is a great sweetening and lightening of our work as teachers, to find, when we meet with our children, that their lessons have been carefully prepared.

3. ARE YOU DOING ALL YOU CAN, BY YOUR WORDS, YOUR EXAMPLE, AND YOUR PRAYERS, TO DEEPEN IMPRESSIONS MADE AT THE SABBATH-SCHOOL? When your child comes home, do you kindly ask him what he has heard, and try to fix the truths upon his mind? If he seems solemnized and impressed, do you prize the precious moment, and try to deepen convictions of sin in his heart? Do you take him into a room alone, and tell him again of God's anger against sin, and tenderly urge and implore him to give himself up to Christ, the only refuge from the wrath to come? Do you pray with him and for him, yearning over him, that Christ may be formed in him, the hope of glory? Do you plead together, with God, for the gift of

the Holy Ghost, that your beloved child may be made a new creature in Christ Jesus? Remember, ye who know the preciousness of a soul, that the soul of your child may now be at the winning or losing: a word of tender encouragement may win him to Christ,—a light or discouraging word may throw him back for ever. Think of eternity,—a fast-coming eternity, into which he may pass in a moment, whether he is ready or no.

Fathers and mothers, what say you to these things? Does conscience acquit you, or does conscience point at you and condemn you, in any of them, or in all? Do your children know, that if you can but get them clad and fed, their *souls* give you little concern? Have you ever truly thus brought home to your heart the charge which God has laid upon you, to bring them up for eternity? Can you solemnly take him to witness how greatly you long after them all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ?

Death may have been knocking at your doors; he may have come into your dwelling, warning you how short and uncertain your time may be, by taking away from you a beloved child, the delight of your heart, and the desire of your eyes. Oh! are you faithful to those who have still been spared? and can you look back in the humble hope that you were faithful to him who is gone? Do you remember when you stood beside his dying bed,—do you remember the last look of his sick, heavy eye, before it was shut in death? When do you expect to see that well-known face again? It will be when you are standing together before the judgment-seat of Christ. And if on that day his eye meets yours, will his look be a look of joy? will you be able to draw him to your side and say, "Lord, here am I, and the child whom thou hast given me?" Or will it be a look

of unutterable anguish?—will this be the bitter cry that pierces your soul, "Father! mother! I once was willing to come to Christ, but *you* did not help me. That night when I came home from the Sabbath-school, sad about my sins, and anxious to flee from the wrath to come,—*you* did not help me, *you* did not pray with me,—and I soon forgot it all,—and *now* I have lost my soul! *Oh! the wrath to come! the blackness of darkness for ever!*"

Dear friends, these are solemn thoughts. Have we made any of you our enemies, because we have told you the truth? It has been our desire to speak it in love, in love to yourselves and your little ones, and with an eye to the glory of Him whose we are, and whom we serve. Will ye be guilty of the blood of your children's souls? Shall this paper be one day a witness against you, that *ye knew your duty, and ye did it not?* Oh, put not its message away from you,—read it over and over again, and may the Lord make it a blessing to you and your children.

To you, believing parents, who are longing and praying for the conversion of your children, we would say,—Sow in faith and hope, though you may long have to sow in tears. "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not." To those who feel that hitherto they have been careless and unfaithful parents, we would once more affectionately say, "Think on these things." Take them with you to a throne of grace, and there resolve, in humble dependence on the promised blessing, anxiously and prayerfully to do henceforth *all* that in you lies, both by your own endeavours, and by helping the endeavours of others, to bring your children to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

May the Lord prosper his own work in your hands. May he raise up, in each of your families, a seed to serve him, and to glorify his name on the earth.

"I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord."—*Genesis* xviii. 19.

"In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: . . . . Because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."—1 *Samuel* iii. 12, 13.

"The promise is unto you, and to your children."—*Acts* ii. 39.

"Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."—*Luke* xviii. 16.

"For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Galatians vi. 7.

We are sowing, we are sowing!
In eternity to reap;
Day by day are harvests growing
For us, after death's long sleep.

We are sowing, we are sowing!
Thoughts are seeds cast in a field;
Every act that we are doing,
Every word, its fruit shall yield.

We are sowing, we are sowing!
And, if to the flesh alone,
Then, corruption ever knowing,
We our sad mistake shall mourn.

We are sowing, we are sowing!
Oh, how solemn then to live!
Soon the fearful day is coming
When we an account must give.

We are sowing, we are sowing!
Let it to the Spirit be;
Then, to light and glory going,
We shall reign eternally.

No. 189.

SKETCH I.

DEATH BED OF THE CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN.

Mrs. J—, the subject of this sketch, was born in the town of L.,. Va., where she resided until after her marriage. She made a profession of religion at an early age, in the Presbyterian Church, of which she continued a most exemplary member until she went to join the Church triumphant above. For some years after her marriage, her husband, to her great grief, was wild and irreligious. She never reproached him for his late hours, irregular conduct, and neglect of her. On the contrary, she would invariably sit up, often long after the midnight hour, to await his return from the gaming table, and meet him with smiles of love and gentleness, and loving words; thus striving to win him to the ways of virtue. On one occasion of this kind, she met him as usual, and when he came into her chamber, she fell on her knees before him, and, from the unfathomed depths of her conjugal love, poured forth such a prayer for him as few ever heard. It was such a pouring out of the soul in earnest cries to God, and so full of love to her husband, that he was subdued, his heart was melted, and he never visited the gaming table again; and it was not long before her prayer was more fully answered, in his happy conversion. He soon joined the church with her, and henceforth, as before indeed, she was his guardian angel, to cheer and aid him in the journey of life. As such he regarded her; and he has often been heard to say that, if he is ever saved, she, under God, was the instrument of his salvation. Her

life was not free from trials, but she bore them patiently. Her christian course was silent and unobtrusive; yet the greenness and fruitfulness of the tree of life marked its progress.

She made no loud professions, but the odours of Eden perfumed her pathway. Her christian character was firm, gentle and consistent. In her family, in the social circle, in the church, and especially in the female prayer-meeting, was her influence felt for good. Long will she be remembered and loved, by those who were permitted to meet with her in these relations. Her life was "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." As her life was one of faith and love, so her end was peace. For many years she had been subject to a disease of the heart, by which she knew she might be called to die at any moment. Doubtless this knowledge, by the grace of God, exerted some influence to lead her to a daily preparation for that which might come so suddenly. In January, 1849, she had a severe attack of this disease, from which she never recovered, but gradually sunk under it, passing away from a world of sin and sorrow, to one of unmingled purity and joy.

Let us accompany her as she passed over the river of death, and witness the passage and the victory. About one o'clock on the morning of the tenth of February, 1849, it became evident that her end was near. During her last hours, she conversed freely, and in all she said her manner was eminently calm and collected. Death was welcomed by her as a friend, rather than feared as an enemy. She spoke of it with the same composure that she did of any other subject. To her faithful, and highly esteemed family physician, she said, "Doctor, I wish you to tell me—am I now dying?" His answer was, "Madam, you seem as well pre-

pared as any lady I ever saw for the communication I shall make; I can give you no hope that you will ever be any better." Without the least apparent emotion, and with a heavenly smile on her countenance, she said, "Very well." Here her husband became greatly affected, and entirely unable to control his feelings; to whom she said, in the intervals of severe coughing and difficulty of breathing, "Do not let your feelings overcome you; be composed. I wish to be very composed at such a time as this, and wish all around me to be composed." And then said with much earnestness, "There does remain a rest for the people of God; how kind and merciful has God been to us, who are such unprofitable servants to him!" To the question by her husband, "Are you willing to die?" her calm and emphatic "I am," showed that she was more than willing. She then took her physician by the hand and said, "Doctor, you have been a faithful physician to me; for this I thank you; I hope you will be faithful to your own soul. I have one request to make of you, that you will now seek an interest in the Saviour's love, and henceforth live for him." He promised to do as she desired. She then again most affectionately urged him not to put it off, saying, "I will remember your promise while I live, and I shall remember it at the day of judgment. Be on your guard, and do not forget it. Try to meet me in Heaven." She then bade farewell to her husband, whom she devotedly loved, and to those around her; and sent messages of love and of exhortation to her absent relations and friends, with the most entire composure. Her message to her aged father was, "Tell father to prepare to meet his beloved wife, my mother, in Heaven." She then said, "Husband, do you remember my favourite psalm, beginning, 'I love thy kingdom, Lord,' &c.?"—which she attempted to sing, but desisted at the re-

quest of her physician. She said, "Tell my brothers and sisters to seek an interest in Christ—for it is a hard thing to die without an interest in the Saviour; but tell them it is a blessed thing to die in the arms of Jesus Christ. Tell them not to mourn for me, but to rejoice, for I am happy."

She then said she wished to see her pastor. As I came into the room, she took me by the hand and said, "Mr. L., I am about to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. I come as a poor, vile, helpless and lost sinner; I come as did the thief on the cross—with no merit of my own to plead, but trusting in the merits of my Saviour, who is able to save unto the uttermost." Being asked if the Saviour was precious to her soul at that solemn hour, she said, "O, yes! precious Saviour! thou art mine. O my precious Saviour, how I love thee!" Soon after she said, as if thinking aloud, "O blessed God! and is it possible that I, so unworthy, so vile, and so unprofitable, shall be in eternity with thee this day? Is it possible that I shall share the glories and joys of heaven so soon? Glory, glory, glory to God, in the highest, that I shall be with Jesus this day in Paradise! Husband, don't you want to go with me?" She spoke often, with much sorrow, of her failings and sins, and lamented that she had done so little for God and his cause; but would also say, "My hope is in Jesus, my all-sufficient Saviour; death is no leap in the dark to me, however it may be to the sinner." Repeatedly she gave glory to God that it was permitted her to feel that her precious Saviour was with her in her passage to the tomb; and that, like the dying thief, she should that day be with Christ in his heavenly kingdom.

On being told the time, she said, "This day shall I be in eternity. O, glory, glory, glory to God! that I am entering eternity! Eternity! O, who can grasp eternity? And

what is dying but a departure from this world of sin, to an eternity of purity? Who would not wish to die and leave such a world of sin and sorrow as this, and go to such a bright, and glorious, and happy eternity?" After suffering in silence for a time, except the lowly breathed, yet earnest prayer for patience, she said, as if the voices of the heavenly choir were already sounding in her ears,

"Hark! they whisper! Angels say,
Sister spirit, come away!"

She spoke of the joy she felt in the near approach of death, and tried to sing the well known hymn, beginning—

"I would not live always; I ask not to stay—"

After lying quiet for a few moments, she asked, as if she were already an inhabitant of another world, "How long is your day here?" On being told, she said, "At sunrise you will enter on a day of twelve hours long—twelve hours! and full of sin, and folly, and disappointment, and suffering; but I shall enter on an eternal day of joy and glory, in the presence of my God. O, what a difference!—your day so short, and mine so long—yours a few hours, mine an eternity! Eternity! eternity! what mind can comprehend eternity?"

She then took an affectionate leave of her servants, urging them to seek salvation, and telling them they must seek Jesus, or they could never die in peace, nor meet her in heaven. After lying for some little time, seemingly unconscious, there was a gasping and a struggling, and then all seemed to be over—we all thought her dead. I assisted in closing her eyes, and removing the pillows with which she had been propped up in the bed. But after a few moments, to our great surprise, she spoke out in a loud and distinct voice, and said, as if she had indeed returned from the spirit land, "Glory, glory be to thee, O God, in the highest! O God! I thank thee that I am permitted to come back again to earth,

to tell my friends what it is to die. Happy people! to know what death is before it comes to them. You have often asked what is death? I tell you it is a hard thing to die—none but a Christian can bear it. O, how can the sinner bear to die?" She then spoke emphatically of the dying pains she had endured, and subjoined, "But your Saviour suffered all this, and more, for you, and who would not suffer and die as I have done, to sleep in the arms of Jesus? I feel his hand in mine." And thus she died, in the full exercise of her faculties, and in the full assurance of faith. Not a cloud was suffered to obscure her view of heaven; not a doubt to mar her triumph. And so she left us, with the song of heaven on her tongue, and the glory of heaven in her soul.

We see, in this brief narrative, the great importance of early piety. It made her useful. But for this, perhaps her husband had never been led to the Saviour. It made her cheerful and happy, too. Religion, with her, was not a gloomy, because it was a real, practical thing. Her hope and faith did not fail her when she came to die; for it was tried faith—it was abiding hope. Hence, her peace flowed as a river, for she knew in whom she believed. And thus, with joy and singing, she passed over the river, and found, as the Pilgrims did, that "the water was not deep and the bottom was good."

SKETCH II.

DEATH BED OF THE MORALIST.

THE young lady of whom I now write, was born in P. Co., Va., where she grew up under circumstances favourable to the growth of all the gentle and tender feelings of our nature. Her home was a happy and a loved one, and there

she early formed habits of reading much and thinking deeply. Hence, her mind was well cultivated, and her tastes were refined and elevated. In short, she was irreproachable in her conduct, and strictly moral and high-minded in her principles; so that, for some years before her death, she might be said to lack but one thing—but that one thing was religion—the love of Jesus in the heart and manifested in the life. Near the close of 1848, I first met with her, when she was suffering from what was thought to be "only a cold," but which proved to be consumption. Her disease had made some progress, before I had much opportunity of learning her state of mind on the subject of religion. At length, when fears began to be entertained for her life, I was sent for to talk and pray with her. I found her willing to listen to me, but with no very definite sense of her personal need of a Saviour. Her mind was in an anxious and unsatisfied state, and she wished to investigate the claims of religion. From various conversations with her, I learned that she had been thinking seriously at times, for several years—had even made some efforts to "get religion," as she expressed it—but that she had no hope. There were practical difficulties and doctrinal ones, too, in her own proud heart, and she had ceased to seek religion, thinking, or at least fearing, that there was no salvation for her. Such was her state of mind in March, 1849, when I began to visit her often. As she became worse in health, so her anxiety of mind increased. And though there were no great outbursts of feeling, yet it was painful to witness in one so young and so lovely, the piercing inquiry of the eye, and the deep suppressed emotions that agitated her feeble frame. Her mental sufferings were so great that she seemed almost to forget her bodily ones. About ten days before her death, on being informed that there was no hope of her recovery, she seemed

to set herself diligently to the great work of life—the work of preparation for death. Her anxiety was very great, yet she said she could not feel—her heart was so hard; and this she would often say with deep feeling. She often expressed great fear lest all her anxiety arose from a desire to avoid suffering, rather than from a sense of sin and its ill desert. She seemed also to be specially fearful of being deceived, and of resting on a false hope. I endeavoured to guard her against this by pointing out the exceeding sinfulness of sin; her guilt in so long neglecting the precious Saviour; her helpless and undone condition without Christ, and his ability and willingness to save unto the uttermost, all them that truly come unto God by him. I tried to set before her the freeness and fullness of the gospel offer, and urged her to accept its rich provisions. Gradually the light of divine truth seemed to break in upon her mind, and though she was almost afraid to indulge hope, lest she should be deceived, yet she did profess hope in the Saviour some hours before her end. Often she asked me to pray for her, and seemed to delight much in hearing christian friends sing. Just before her death she asked me to pray that she might have patience to await her appointed time, and that "an abundant entrance might be administered unto her into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And thus she died, with a trembling hope, with many fears and misgivings of soul. She died in the morning of life; the roses of youth were exchanged for the gloom of the grave. She passed into eternity with a bare hope—a feeble hope of finding mercy of the Lord. But there was no strong faith, no blessed assurance, no lively joys, and no soul-sustaining sense of a present, Almighty Saviour, as there was in the case of the subject of the former sketch. Instead of the calm trust and holy joys which Mrs. J—, the

former one, had, as she encountered the last enemy, Miss T— had to seek all this at a time when she most needed their support. Instead of "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," which the other enjoyed, she had only "trembling hopes and gloomy fears."

Instead of welcoming death as a friend come to take her home, as the other did, she looked upon it as a dire necessity. We see, then, that a moral life cannot give the death-bed joys of a Christian. The most exalted morality could not sustain her in a dying hour; and it cannot give the reader comfort when he is called to meet God. Dear reader, you will die without hope, unless you find a better source of comfort than morality. And beware how you trust to a death-bed repentance. It may prove deceptive—it often, usually does. It may in your case, if you trust to it.

SKETCH III.

DEATH BED OF THE UNGODLY.

Of the early life of the subject of this third sketch, little is known. The accounts we have of his younger years represent him as corrupt in morals and vicious in his life. He early became a gambler and intemperate. When I first became acquainted with him, his health had failed on account of his criminal indulgences, and my sympathies were awakened for him and his family.

I afterwards visited them frequently, and attempted to turn their attention to religion. On the wife, there is reason to hope, some good effects were produced; but on him none was seen. His course continued still downward in sin, until, in the fall of 1848, he was laid on his dying bed. His illness was short, and he soon felt that he must die.

And then so great was his alarm and agitation that he seemed unable to listen calmly, or intelligently, to the offers of mercy. His frequent cry was, "O, what shall I do? I am not prepared to die, I cannot die; what must I do to be saved?" In answer to all my attempts to tell him of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, he would say, "O, I do repent; I am sorry for my sins, but I don't feel any better." Sometimes he would say, almost as if he was angry with God, "Why don't God pardon my sins?" On being asked if he thought his prayers and tears laid God under obligations to save him, as if they merited it of him, he answered, "To be sure I do. If I repent and pray to him he is bound to save me." And to this trust in the fancied merit of his prayers and tears, he seemed to cling to the last. And such was his excited and alarmed state of mind, that the plan of salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ, seemed to be presented in vain. He seemed to feel as if his cries and tears merited something from God; and his own utter sinfulness, and helplessness, and ill-desert, on account of sin, he seemed not to understand. Sometimes he would cry out, "O, I can't die—I won't die; why don't God save me?" And then he would curse God because he did not pardon him. And thus he died, with mingled cries, and tears, and prayers, and curses. His last hours presented a scene of anguish not soon to be forgotten. His imploring looks, his piercing cries and almost passionate prayers, touched the hardest heart. It seemed almost like the wailings of the lost. And yet such a death was but the legitimate and natural ending of such a life. It was but the appropriate harvest of his own seeding. It is no more strange that such a life should have such an ending, than that one should reap the same kind of grain he sowed. "For as a man soweth, so shall he also reap." God has so

appointed, that a certain course of life and character, usually and naturally, as we say, leads to a certain kind of death agreeing with the life. And who will say that certain eternal results are not connected with a certain course of life, as well as temporal ones? We do see that a certain character and course of life, legitimately and naturally, lead to a peaceful or triumphant death; and that a contrary course of life leads to a death of insensibility or of fearfulness. Who dare to say that they do not naturally lead to as different results, or more so, in eternity? Who will say that the man dying in despair, after a life spent in sin, will be as safe or as happy in eternity as the one who calmly falls asleep in Jesus, after a life spent in his service? Surely, every man, in his inmost soul, will say, "Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his." But usually the man dies as he has lived. Seldom is the character radically, truly changed, on a dying bed. There is often great anxiety, alarm and anguish; and there are many prayers, and promises, and strong cries; but, usually, no real change of heart is effected under such circumstances. As the life is, so is the death. Dear reader, I have attempted to describe what I have seen and heard; and these three persons may stand for you all—the Christian, the moralist and the careless sinner. Every one of you may be found in the one or the other of these classes; and the scene I have portrayed is a type of what awaits you all. And this may serve as a mirror to show you the manner of your own death. For, usually, the true Christian will die peacefully, happily or triumphantly. The moralist will die in stupor and insensibility, or he will be filled with anxious fears or trembling hopes, if he obtain a hope at all; and will probably be deceived even in them. While the sinner's deathbed is often a scene of distress and anguish to those who

witness it, and of terror and despair to those who endure it. In the cases before us: one lived a devotedly pious life, and died peacefully and triumphantly—a death worth living and labouring a life-time to realize—a death to be desired and longed for, as the fitting end of a life of faith in Christ. For her "to die was gain." "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him." The second one lived an outwardly correct and strictly moral life; and yet it failed to afford her any comfort in a dying hour. Her only hope was obtained by renouncing her morality, and fleeing to Jesus. She died with only a trembling hope; and whether she died safely at last, admits of a strong doubt. There is some hope in her case, but there are also fears; for, doubtless, most who make a profession on a dying bed, are deceived —their hope is as the spider's web. While the last one noticed, lived a careless, wicked life, and died in despair almost too great for utterance. Now I repeat, that the manner of their death was the appropriate and natural ending of their life. In life they sowed the seed, and now, in their death, they were beginning to reap the harvest. I say beginning, for they will go on reaping for ever.

Can any one doubt which died the happiest, the safest, or, which will be happiest for ever? No; there is no doubt. It is not a vain thing to serve God, as to this world, and will not be in regard to the next. Reader, to which class do you belong? From your course of life now, you may learn what your death is likely to be. Those only can die a happy death who die in Jesus,—and those only can have assurance that they die in Jesus, who live a life of faith in him, a life of love and holy obedience. Then come to Jesus and come now; for he is not often found on a death-bed, if he is rejected until then.

No. 190.

SECRET PRAYER.

PRAYER forms a part of every system of religion upon earth. It is mentioned in the Scriptures more than five hundred times. Holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect need no prayer. Their wants are all supplied. They have a delightful sense of dependence, but no painful sense of want. Fallen angels and wicked men in hell are in despair, and cannot pray. They have no heart to cry for mercy, and they know God will not hear them.

But men in the land of the living may send their cries to God; they ought to pray; they must pray. Nature teaches the feeble to ask aid of the strong. God invites, commands, and in many ways encourages us to perform this duty. He has promised to hear our cries, and his word cannot fail. Christ set us an example,—he spent whole nights in prayer. We are weak, and poor, and sinful, and guilty, and ignorant. God is strong, and rich, and all-wise, and full of grace and mercy. All men should come to him. Though hypocrites never love prayer and never long practise it in secret; yet good men have always called upon God—they delight in the Almighty.

Men ought not, on any account, to give over praying. In prosperity they should call upon God, lest they be proud, forget their rock, and play the fool. They who in joy have not God in all their thoughts, will in sorrow remember him but to be troubled. In adversity men should pray, lest they despond and pine away. In the morning men should pray, for the trials of the day are before them. They should pray in the evening, for who knows what hour death may come?

They should pray at home, for God's blessing is needed in every house. They should pray abroad, for "the Lord preserveth the stranger." In health men should pray, that they may not live like atheists; and in sickness, that they may not die like brutes.

Prayer is the vital breath of the Christian. Without it life cannot be maintained. He who prays at stated times only, will make but little progress in holiness. He who prays not at all at stated times, will soon lose all habits of devotion. Nothing can render it safe for one to omit prayer. The reason given for appointing deacons to serve tables was, that the Apostles might "give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word." A minister may devolve some duties on others; but on no account may any one cease to pray. That is his life. Luther spent three hours each day in prayer.

But what is prayer? It is calling upon God. It is adoring him for what he is; thanking him for what he has done; confessing before him our transgressions; supplicating his unmerited mercies; acknowledging his justice in our misery; pleading with him to do us good, and filling our mouths with arguments drawn from his word. It is "an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies."

Prayer must be sincere. Lifeless petitions are no more prayer than a corpse is a man. A heartless prayer is a mockery of God. No time, nor place, nor form, nor posture in devotion, pleases God, if the heart is wanting. Owen says, "Heartless, lifeless, wordy prayers, the fruit of convictions and gifts, or of custom and outward occasions, however multiplied, and whatever devotion they may seem to be accompanied withal, will never engage spiritual affec-

tions to them." Of course, they will not engage the ear of God.

Prayer must also be fervent. Languor shows a want of sincerity. Our necessities are great, our sins many, our enemies lively, our dangers imminent, our strength small. Surely, our cries should be earnest. A prayer that moves not us, will not move God. True prayer is with groanings that cannot be uttered. He who is often in prayer is commonly lively in that duty. It has passed into a proverb—To pray frequently is to pray fervently. Under the law, every sacrifice was consumed with *fire*. Not the wild fire of fanaticism, but the fire of love must inflame our devotions, or they will send up no sweet incense to heaven. "Elijah's prayer brought down fire from heaven, because, being fervent, it carried up fire to heaven."

Prayer must also be humble. Praying is the act of the poor. To be both poor and proud is monstrous. "A proud heart and a lofty mountain are never fruitful." It is better to die, crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," than to live, boasting, "I am not as other men are." In prayer the mourner is the orator; the penitent, the winner. Sighs and groans are the best rhetoric at the mercy-seat. God sends the proud empty away, but pours salvation on the lowly. He "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Trail says, "The richest saint must be, and is an humble beggar at grace's door, all his days; and Christ the Lord of the house and the dispenser of the alms."

Prayer must also be in faith. If our faith is strong, so much the better; but genuine faith, though it be weak, shall not be unrequited. Faith among the graces, and prayer among the duties, hold a very prominent place. In prayer, as in every duty, without faith it is impossible to please God. If any man pray, "let him ask in faith no-

thing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." A prayer without faith is as dead as a body without a soul. Gurnall says, "Never was faithful prayer lost at sea. No merchant trades with such certainty as the praying saint. Some prayers, indeed, have a longer voyage than others, but they return with the richer lading at last." "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Faith in prayer has a special regard *first* to God's power. It says, he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. It says, nothing is too hard for God. It *next* regards his grace. It believes that if our prayers are for things agreeable to God's will, and if the granting of our petitions will be for God's glory and our good, he will in his own good time and way grant our requests. Nor is this reliance foolish. God, who cannot lie, has promised all this.

Prayer should also be importunate. In this duty we should not faint, nor be discouraged. To this end Christ spoke two parables. We must not despond, but hope to the end; yea, we must hope against hope. We must not be timid, but come with boldness to the throne of grace. We must not leave off calling on God till he grants our requests, or takes us to himself. He who turns coward and hides himself, will perish in the way. The fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, are in Scripture all classed together. We should pray always. The excellent Thomas Watson died in his closet, at prayer. I never heard of a dying man regretting that he had wasted any portion of his life in hearty prayer.

Our prayers must also be accompanied with hatred of sin. Many prayers are hindered by the love or practice of some

secret iniquity, or of some doubtful course of life. Let all remember that saying of the Psalmist, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

In like manner let us beware of praying for wicked ends. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." In all things let us seek God's glory. He is worthy to be honoured in all things and at all times.

We should also endeavour to prepare our minds and hearts for this duty. "The musician first *tunes* his instrument, then plays." It is a great thing to be imbued with a right spirit. Those who would pray aright must pray to be taught how to pray. Without help from above we can do nothing. The disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Dyer says, "The gift of prayer may have praise with men; but it is the grace of prayer that has power with God." Zophar well teaches that men should first "prepare their hearts," and then "stretch out the hands toward God."

Prayer must also be in the name of Christ. He alone is worthy; his merits alone avail. His blood converts the throne of justice into a throne of grace. His intercession is essential to the success of our petitions. His name alone is the perfume, which sweetens every spiritual sacrifice. Christ says, "Hitherto, ye have asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "If ye shall ask any thing, in my name, I will do it." When the Saviour puts our prayers into his golden censer, sprinkles them with his most precious blood, and presents them, a sweet-smelling savour always ascends before God. A converted chief in New Zealand, speaking of this matter, said, "Our prayers are heavy—no light, no fly up; they stay down here; but the name of Jesus Christ is light—that flies up to heaven quicker. The Father loves to hear that

name. That takes our prayers up with it. If we pray by ourselves alone, the Father not hear; but Jesus Christ pray the Father for us. Our heavy prayer fastened to his prayer, goes in before the Father, and so the Father hear."

We are not forbidden to employ the same phrases more than once in the same prayer; but "vain repetitions—such as the heathen use," are to be avoided. Often in the Psalms do we find the same words used more than once. But the heathen and the Pharisees thought that they should gain something by having their prayers long. Though God will not hear us for our much speaking, nor for our loud speaking, yet he bows his gracious ear whenever penitence, and faith, and love carry us to the mercy-seat, although, like Jacob, we wrestle all night. Let us linger around the throne of grace. Let us bring all our concerns before God. "Temporal affairs are best expedited when they are made the subject of secret prayer." At times we must be crushed, if we cannot roll our burdens over on an Almighty arm. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Cry often for help. "What a happy, what an alone happy resort is a mercy-seat, in seasons of suspense and trial!"

While prayer cannot be too child-like and confiding, yet we are shocked when it is irreverent. God is, indeed, on a throne of grace; but that is as glorious as a throne of judgment. He whose heart is not awed, and whose spirit is not hushed, by the glories of God's mercy, has never seen them in their attractions. One reason why a noisy prayer in a public assembly so slightly impresses the major part of serious people, is a suspicion that the feeling is not deep, and that reverence is sadly wanting. "It is not the stretching of the lungs, but the stretching of the desires, that pleases God."

In prayer we should seek and wait for answers. When we write to a friend, making a request, how anxious we are for a favourable reply. Many old writers tell us that we must not leave our prayers, as the ostrich does her egg in the sand, never watching to see what becomes of it.

Those who attach great importance to the rhetorical beauty or florid style of prayers, seem to forget that the dead are often more handsomely dressed than the living. God desires our hearts, not our eloquence. Wit, poetic strains and antitheses may take men by the ears, but they move not God. In public prayer it pains the pious to witness a straining after striking expressions. In secret prayer, all such effort is vanity.

Secret prayer should be, as far as possible, secluded from the eyes of men. In corrupt churches the people often go to places of public worship to offer their personal devotions. In behalf of such a practice, it is pleaded that the presence of the usual circumstances of public worship are friendly to devotional feeling. But God is wiser than man. In his sermon on the mount the Saviour settled the matter: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."—MATT. VI. 6, 7.

It is certain that prayer is efficacious. God has said so in many places. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." The Scriptures abound in

such statements. Some have been so much impressed with the immediate good effects of prayer on themselves, that they have been in danger of forgetting that it also had power with God. Mrs. More says, "Prayer draws all the christian graces into its focus. It draws charity, with her lovely train; repentance, with her holy sorrows; faith, with her elevated eye; hope, with her grasped anchor; beneficence, with her open hand; zeal, looking far and wide, to bless; humility, with her introverted eye, looking home." This is all true. But prayer not only fits us to receive blessings—it also secures them. The godly often get their petitions. Mr. Henry says, "God is sometimes found of them that seek him not; but he is always found of them that seek him." In Holland, it grew into a proverb, that "There is nothing gained by stealing, and nothing lost by praying." The German proverb is, "Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey." Mason says, "There wants nothing but a believing prayer to turn every promise into a performance." If there was more prayer there would be in our churches fewer critics and more converts, fewer sleepers and more penitents. Prayer is the great means appointed by Christ for filling the churches with a living ministry, and for giving that ministry a glorious efficiency. Some devils of old, and some evils of modern times, are cast out only by prayer and fasting. A great benefit is secured by public prayer, when it inclines us to our closets.

Prayer is also sure to make those things comforts to us which would otherwise be our misery. It has a fitness to this end; and God hears and answers all who call upon him in sincerity. "Prayer is the golden chain of union between heaven and earth, and it keeps open the blessed communication." How often have God's dying servants borne testimony to the worth of prayer! When about to leave

the world, Bickersteth said, with peculiar solemnity, "No prayer is lost; prayers are lasting, living things. It is a wonderful thought that no prayer is lost. Prayers are, as it were, indented around the throne of God; and when he looks around, he sees the prayers of his people, covered with the sweet incense of a Saviour's intercession." In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Paul enumerates many achievements of faith. In nearly every case we might show that it was by a faith that wrestled in prayer that the victory was won. A recent writer, speaking of the power of prayer, says:

"The Bible account of the power of prayer is the best we have, or can have.

Abraham's servant prays—Rebekah appears.

Jacob prays—the angel is conquered; Esau's revenge is changed to fraternal love.

Joseph prays—he is delivered from the prison of Egypt.

Moses prays—Amalek is discomfited; Israel triumphs.

Joshua prays—the sun stands still; victory is gained.

Hannah prays—the prophet Samuel is born.

David prays—Ahithophel goes out and hangs himself.

Asa prays—Israel gains a glorious victory.

Jehoshaphat prays—God turns away his anger, and smiles.

Elijah prays—the little cloud appears—the rain descends upon the earth.

Elisha prays—the waters of the Jordan are divided; a child is restored to life.

Isaiah prays—one hundred eighty and four thousand Assyrians are dead.

Hezekiah prays—the sun dial is turned back; his life is prolonged.

Mordecai prays—Haman is hanged; Israel is free.

Nehemiah prays—the king's heart is softened in a minute.

Ezra prays—the walls of Jerusalem begin to rise.

The church prays—the Holy Ghost is poured out.

The church prays again—Peter is delivered by an angel.

Paul and Silas pray—the prison shakes; the door opens, every man's bands are loosed."

So that it is very wicked not to pray at all. It is better to have no home, than no prayer. It is better to be a praying prisoner than a prayerless conqueror. He who does not love prayer, does not love God. No man is more to be pitied; no man needs more solemn warnings; no man is in more imminent peril than he who never prays. Prayer is as much needed now as in any former age of the world!

Those who lead lives of prayer are safe. Nothing shall harm them. They are princes and have power with God. They prevail. Christ himself prayed much. "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, he was heard in that he feared." He who prays like Christ, like Christ also shall conquer.

And now, dear reader, will you give yourself to prayer? Will you pour out your heart before God continually? Christ can fill you with his mercies and his spirit. Then nothing can check your progress heavenward; and God himself shall be your God!

For want of more secret prayer, many complain of unhappiness. They are sad. They grieve sorely. Tears are their meat day and night. Waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

If your consolations are small, the cause is *not* found in any want of words of comfort from God. The Bible is full of sayings which are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. The promises are exceedingly great and precious.

Nor is there any want of assurance that God will make

good all he has promised. His truth and faithfulness stand pledged before heaven and earth. Yea, "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. vi: 17, 18.

Nor is there wanting a Spirit of consolation. The Holy Ghost is by office the Comforter. He is promised to all who believe and obey. Christ said, "I will not leave you comfortless;" "I will come unto you;" "I will send you the Comforter." That blessed Spirit can fill any soul with joy. He is a fountain of living waters, a most plentiful well-spring of divine supports and consolations.

Nor are all the saints left with feeble comforts. In some, joy unspeakable abounds. Their cup runneth over. They obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away. They lift up their voice, and shout aloud for joy. Their heads are anointed with the oil of gladness.

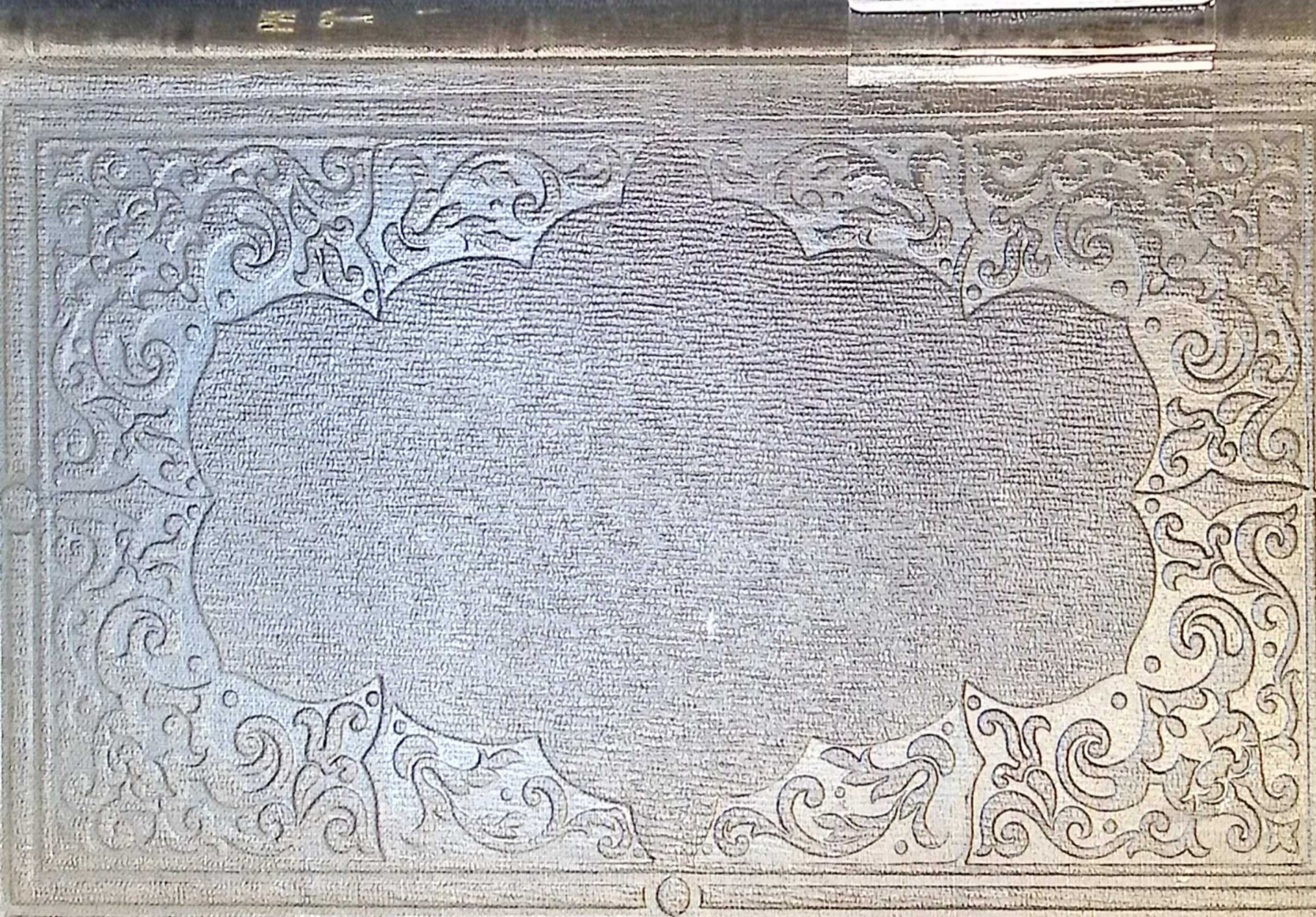
But a low state of consolation probably proceeds from a low state of piety. We are often straitened in ourselves. Faith is weak. Love loses its ardour. Penitence is not deep. A tender conscience is not maintained. Zeal is languid. Deeds of charity do not abound. Self-denial is avoided. In this case it is a mercy to make us know our misery, and to show us that it is an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the living God.

Or perhaps spiritual comforts are withheld from us because we do not highly prize them, and carefully seek after them. God does not commonly grant great spiritual mercies to those who lightly esteem them. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Or, having obtained some divine consolations, we do not walk softly before the Lord, but allow ourselves to be unduly elated. Pride mars every thing good. God never dwells with the lofty, but always with the lowly.

Or some other sin may be eating out, as a cancer, the vitals of piety. "Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins are increased, I have done these things unto thee." Jer. xxx: 15.

Or you may be living in ignorance of some important truth revealed in Scripture. All good consolations are by the word of God. He who lightly esteems the oracles of God, or slights any portion of them, does his own soul a sad injury. If God has said all you need to sustain you, search the Bible till you find it, and then hold it fast. No reasonings could be stronger than those found in Heb. iv: 14—16, and Rom. viii: 26—39. The logic of the Bible is divine, irrefutable.

Then let every man search his heart and ways, and turn to the Lord. He is mighty to embolden and deliver. His mercy reaches to the heavens. We all err by not coming out of ourselves. We may look at our hearts till a horror of great darkness shall cover us. Let us look to Jesus. He is a sun, and has healing in his wings. His grace is amazing. He knows our frame. He pities like a God. If the consolations of God are small with us, the fault is all our own.

And let them be no longer small. Cry after them. Lift up your voice for them. Plead with God for his name's sake. Never rest satisfied till Christ fills your soul with peace and joy.